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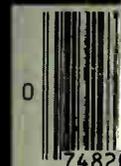
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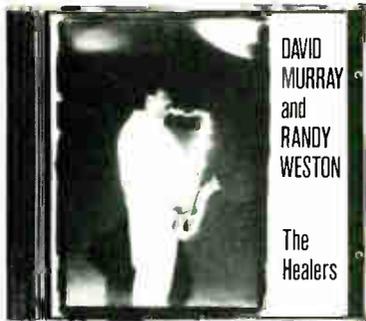
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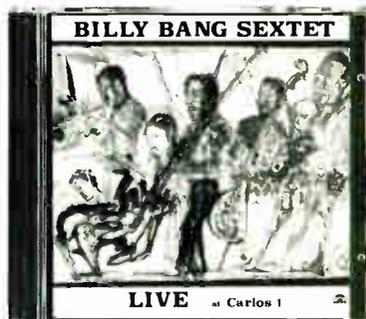
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## LIFE AS A CABARET

by Jeff Levenson

So, New York City decided to play hardball. And the umpire—Acting Justice David B. Saxe of the New York State Supreme Court—threw 'em right out of the game. Before the gloating starts from around the country (hold those cheers and snickers), let's provide some deep background and explain why anyone reading **down beat** should give a hoot.

New York had on its books a law restricting the number of musicians who could perform on stage in many of the city's clubs and cabarets. Specifically, the statute limited to three those musicians occupying a stage in any club that did not have a cabaret license. The law stated that clubs without licenses could present "incidental musical entertainment," as long as the group providing this entertainment was a trio or smaller.

The edict, it seems, was attached in the early '60s to a Prohibition-era law—still on the books—aimed at curbing speakeasies.

That original law contained clauses regarding the "good character" of musicians and the kinds of instruments they could legally play.

Roughly four years ago, the City decided to enforce the three-musician provision with a no-nonsense, Elliot Ness approach that fined club owners \$100 a day and threatened to close down businesses that flagrantly violated the law. (Six clubs were closed.)

The obvious question: Why did New York City, epicenter for activities savory and otherwise, and cultural main-vein for the cosmos-at-large, feel so threatened by the prospect of *four* musicians on a stage? Judge Saxe (and countless club owners and unemployed players) wondered.

The City asserted that too many musicians on a stage would invariably lead to increased traffic, noise, congestion, and sundry other transgressions against the common good. Hmmm. . . . Furthermore, the City insisted that by clamping down on these non-licensed clubs they were maintaining the rule of law, an argument founded in reasoning more circular than the renowned breathing techniques of the late, great Rahsaan Roland Kirk.

The City, making itself unshakably clear,

insisted on protecting the people. (One can almost see enforcement agents preparing "Exhibit A: *Cabaret Madness*," a film submitted as prima facie evidence of jazz music's deleterious effects on innocent pot smokers.)

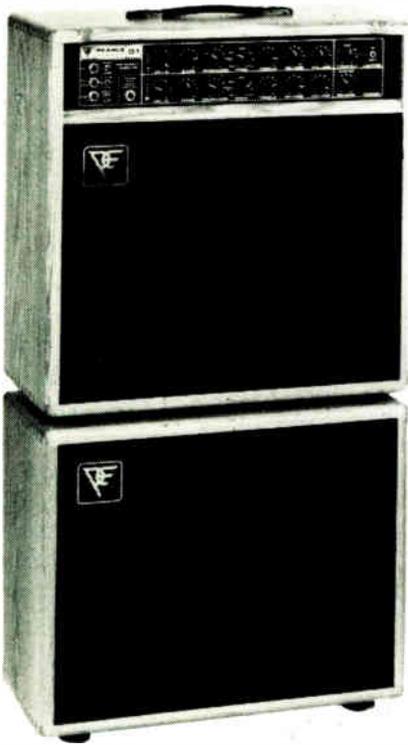
Into this mess rode the American Federation of Musicians and three local union members who decided to challenge the legality of the edict. With much fanfare, and on-the-record support from the likes of Lionel Hampton and Tony Bennett, the Federation brought suit against the City, charging that professional musicians were being denied employment opportunities and that the City was cutting its cultural throat. Demonstrations on the steps of City Hall ensued, replete with extended media coverage. The law became a cause celebre.

Judge Saxe heard the arguments and decided that the three-musician law was unconstitutional because it abridged the First Amendment right of composers and performers and it limited the free expression of musical ideas. Some musical forms requiring larger ensembles, he cited, such as bluegrass and Dixieland, were all but endangered species. He wrote, "The

CONTINUED ON PAGE 59

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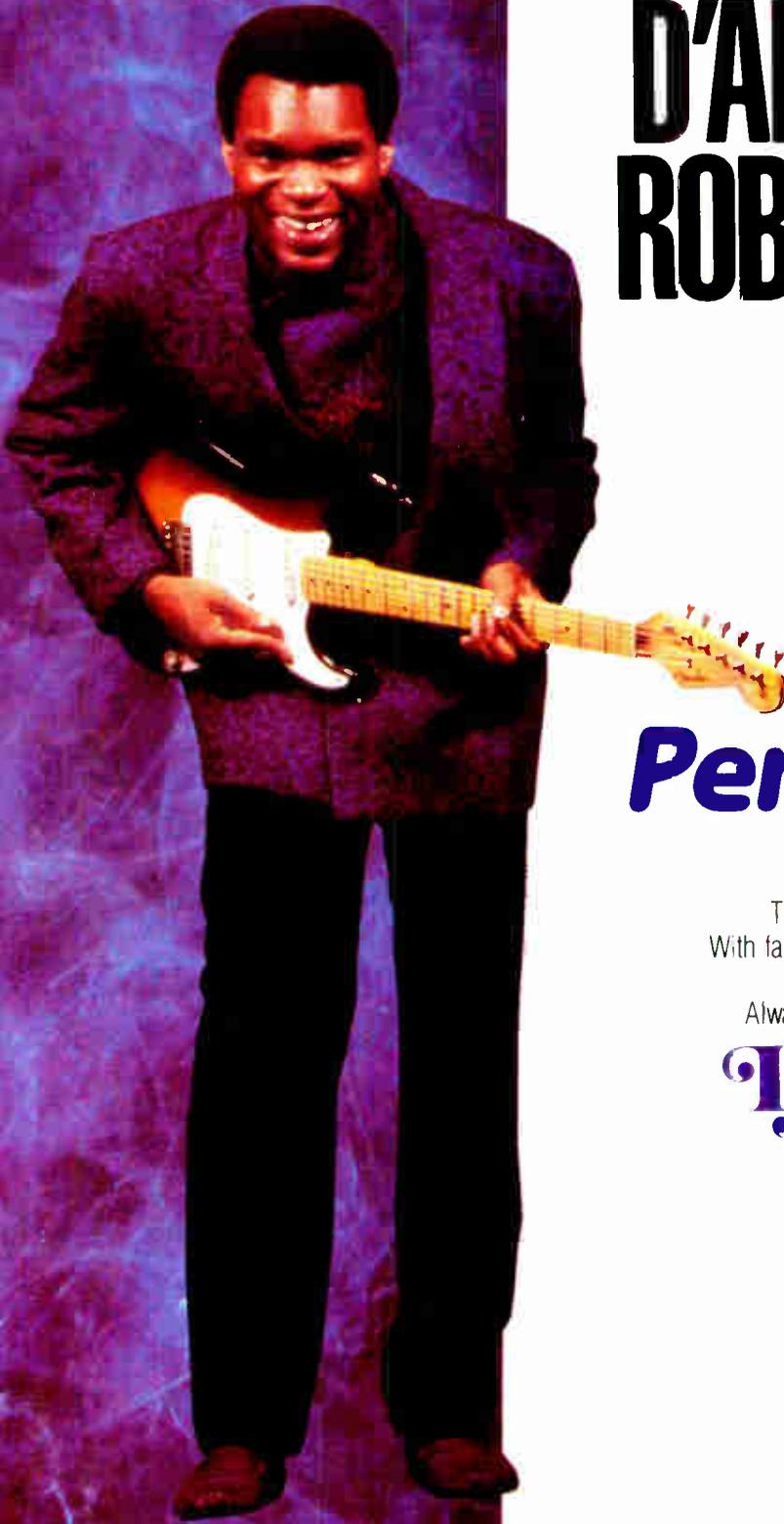
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A full-length photograph of Robert Cray, an African American blues guitarist, smiling and playing a white electric guitar. He is wearing a dark, patterned blazer over a dark shirt and dark trousers. The background is a textured, mottled blue and purple.

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# chords & discords

## PLEASANT REMINDERS

After a one-year subscription (a gift from my sister), I couldn't be more pleased with **down beat**. The only problem is wondering what I've missed over the last many years. In the February issue, the comments from Lenny Pickett and Carlos Santana were particularly interesting. I had wondered who played tenor on *Saturday Night Live* ever since their band

"revivified," and Pickett's thoughts on Eric Dolphy showed the strength of tradition among the great saxophonists. Even more revealing were Santana's comments on John Coltrane. We all know that genius transcends boundaries of musical form or style, but how nice to be reminded by two such outstanding contemporary players.

Robert F. Vogt, Jr.  
Atlanta, GA

## NO ACCENT, PLEASE!

The December '87 issue's feature article on me was quite enjoyable. However I must write to let the readers know that there is *no* accent on my name. It is just TURRE (unaccented E), and I was born in Omaha, Nebraska not Oklahoma! I was born in the same hospital (St. Joseph's) the same year as the wonder drummer Victor Lewis, who has been playing with J. J. Johnson. There is one more small point. I used to work with Bay Area alto sax man (not pianist) Bishop Norman Williams. He was one of my great teachers. I owe him a lot and would like him properly acknowledged.

Steve Turre  
New York, NY

## BIRD CONCERNS

I just re-read Ross Russell's strong *Bird Lives!* again, and I wonder two things: 1) Was that concert in Paris with a 90-piece symphony orchestra and Bird really not recorded (by Granz)?! 2) Does that Gjon Mili film really exist, as Russell says. Has it or will it be released on video, preferably together with Mili's classic *Jam Session* with Lester Young and others from 1943? If anyone having information would please write me, I would be thankful.

Gunnar Lindqvist  
Stora Gungans väg 11, S-122 31 Enskede,  
Sweden

## MISSING MARSH

I was very saddened to read that Warne Marsh had played his final bar (see **db**, Mar. '88). It was a good piece that you wrote about him but you left out one of the best accomplishments of his career. Out of the dozens of sax players that were auditioned for the group Supersax, Warne was the one that was chosen. And, I might add, rightfully so. In 1974 Supersax played in the club La Bastille in Houston, Texas and the group was staying in the same hotel that I was. After the gig, Warne and Med Flory invited me to have breakfast with them. They were really "super" guys. I'm going to miss Mr. Marsh very much.

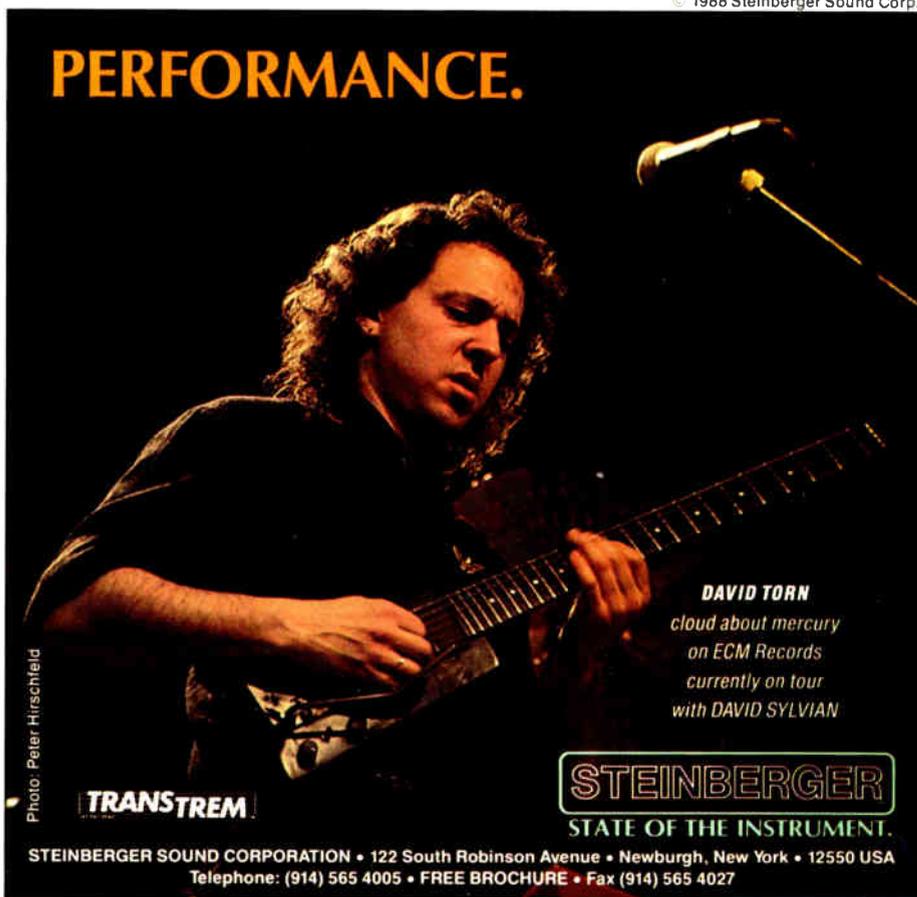
Robert G. Gonzales  
Corpus Christi, TX

## PETITION FOR PETTIFORD

In 1960 in Copenhagen, Denmark, I established a fund with some Danish jazz fans, the purpose to economically support Cello Laertes, Celeste Vivian, and Cellina Leontine—all children of the famous bassist Oscar Collins Pettiford, who died in Copenhagen September 8, 1960. They no

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

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Photo: Peter Hirschfeld

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# The New Yamaha APX. From Two Points Of View.



"When Yamaha asked me to try its new APX, I played it in rehearsals and I thought there was something exceptional about the guitar.

"I ended up recording with it on a Marc Jordan record. Everybody was so impressed, they wanted to buy it.

"But, what I loved about it was its sonic quality. It's just real musical. Real even. Real round. Very expressive. I plug it into a board and it sounds like a guitar.

"Another thing—the harmonics are great. Play the top, middle or bottom of the fret board, it's never too thin or too fat. Even just to play it by yourself in a room, it sounds great.

"I've already written stuff on it. There's no way I'm going to give it back."

Steve Farris  
*Mr. Mister*

"When Yamaha asked me to try its new APX guitar, I was supposed to evaluate it then give it back. No way. It's a great guitar.

"What killed me about the guitar was its stereo feature.

"Not fake stereo. Real.

"Not done with delays. You play it and it goes left-side, right-side, left-side, right-side.

"I took it on the road and used it the whole tour. Even for a solo.

"I told them I'd buy it, but I want this guitar.

"I've had other acoustic guitars, but none that could do what this one can. The APX's are the only acoustics I'm going to use."

Steve Lukather  
*Toto*

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# chords & discords

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

longer live here. As the children are now of age, they are entitled to share the money of the fund and in that connection some of them had plans of going to Copenhagen to see the places where they used to live, and to dwell at their father's grave. I am writing to **down beat**, hoping that someone might be able to provide me with information of where the family members may now reside.

Paul Kurzenberger  
Nygade 7  
1164 Kobenhavn K.

## McBOO-BOOS

I would like to make a comment about an article you wrote in the March '88 issue of **down beat**. On page 12, you wrote an article about the McDonald's All-American Band with a couple of errors. The first mistake involves your statement about the Chicago Medinah Temple Concert. The selections by the McDonald's Jazz Sextet included *Song For My Father* by Horace Silver, *Santa Claus Is Coming To Town*—a Bob Curnow arrangement, and finally *Donna Lee* by Charlie Parker. *Dolphin Dance*, however, was not one of the selections as you have stated in your article. Secondly, you had an error involving the school in which the bassist, Keith Brady, went to. Keith goes to Mandan Senior High in Mandan, ND. Brady does not go to South High in Fargo, ND.

Keith Brady  
Mandan, ND

## CHASING CHASE

I am in a desperate search for information on the late Bill Chase, trumpet player, leader of the group Chase, who died in a plane crash in 1974. If any of your readers have any related information, please send it directly to me as soon as possible at PO Box 9382, Wichita, Kansas, 67277. Copies of related articles will be greatly appreciated.

Paul Hudson  
Wichita, KS

## TECH ADDITION

Congratulations on a fine article on Steve Coleman—it's great to read about a horn player so unafraid to tackle technology. My only disappointment was that the equipment list didn't include the device that lets Steve drive his sequencer and synthesizers from his horn: the IVL Pitchrider 4000 Mark II. C'mon guys, don't forget us up here in Canada!

Fred Specken  
Product Specialist  
Victoria, B.C.

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## INTERNATIONAL GUITAR MONTH

**NEW YORK**—In celebration of the guitar's widespread popularity, and in recognition of the millions of musicians who play the instrument, an industry organization—the Guitar and Accessories Music Marketing Association (GAMMA)—has designated the month of April as International Guitar Month.

This is the second annual marketing and promotional campaign aimed at heightening instrument awareness and tying together the efforts of retailers, manufacturers, radio stations, and associated organizations with an interest in advancing guitar usage.

Throughout the country's top 25 markets, activities are scheduled during April that will enhance the instrument's image and visibility. In-store give-aways, videos, work-



shops, battles-of-the-bands, and media tie-ins will all showcase the guitar's place in contemporary music.

A spokesman for GAMMA acknowledged that much fine-tuning remains before this annual campaign becomes a standard industry practice. But he is hopeful that this year's successes will do much to inspire overseas markets to participate in subsequent promotions, thus truly "internationalizing" the cause.

—jeff levenson

## JAZZ MEDIA MEET

**CHICAGO**—The University of Illinois at Chicago will host the first Arts Midwest/down beat Jazz Media Symposium, "Commentary, Counterpoint & Harmony," from May 20-22.

The three-day event will include topics of interest and information for both print and electronic media. Subjects will cover Increasing Print Outlets For Free-Lance Writers, Keeping A Jazz Station/Program On The Air, Record Companies & The Media, Jazz Radio Syndication, Musicians & The Media, The Writer's Responsibility & Function, and The Future Of Jazz: Hope Or Hype?

Panelists will be among the most knowledgeable experts in the field—industry executives like Ricky Schultz (MCA/Impulse/Zebra Records), Terri Hinte (Fantasy/Prestige/Milestone Records), Bob Porter (independent producer); radio names Oscar Treadwell, Ben Sidran, Neil Tesser, and Linda Yohn; and scribes Stanley Crouch, Art Lange, Gene Lees, Howard Mandel, Bill Milkowski, and Kevin Whitehead.

In addition, UIC professor/jazz film collector Dr. Susan Markle will present a program of rare jazz on video discs—including a 40 minute studio concert by the Thelonious Monk Quartet, available only in Japan. The UIC Jazz Festival will run concurrently on-campus, fea-



Dizzy Gillespie

turing Dizzy Gillespie and the Count Basie Orchestra directed by Frank Foster.

The UIC campus is a short train ride from downtown Chicago hotels and nightlife, and reduced-cost housing is available on-campus (though space is limited, so apply early). Pre-registration for the three days is \$30 (or \$20 per individual day), \$35 at the door. (Symposium attendees also receive a reduced rate for festival tickets.)

For more information and advance registration, contact Willard Jenkins at Arts Midwest, 612/341-0755. db

## Final Bar



STEVIE KAGAN

**Al Cohn**, celebrated tenor saxophonist/composer/arranger, died February 15 of liver cancer at Pocono Hospital in East Stroudsburg, Pa. He was 62. A self-taught saxophonist, Cohn also played baritone, clarinet, and bass clarinet.

Born Alvin Gilbert Cohn in Brooklyn, NY on November 24, 1925, Cohn got his start in 1943 with clarinetist Joe Marsala's band, going on to work with Georgie Auld, Alvino Rey, and Buddy Rich. He joined Woody Herman's band in 1948, replacing Herbie Stewart in the famous "Four Brothers" saxophone section. It was with Herman's band that he made a name for himself, playing alongside "brothers" Stan Getz and Zoot Sims. Although he didn't have the spotlight as often as they did, Cohn's Lester Young-inspired solos and occasional writing for the band made a lasting impact.

Cohn went on to play with Artie Shaw and Eliot Lawrence, subsequently freelancing, mainly as an arranger. It was in the mid-'50s that Cohn started making a name for himself as a top-notch New York studio musician. He wrote numerous arrangements for Broadway musicals and television shows in addition to recording as a leader and sideman. By 1957, Cohn and Sims were playing clubs and recording together quite often. He started cutting back on his studio work after his time with Sims, only to begin again as a full-time soloist in the early '70s. He recorded a number of LPs under his own name for the Concord Jazz and Xanadu labels.

Cohn's soulful, rhythmically intense sound on tenor distinguished him from many players of his generation, and his swinging, modern, Basie-oriented arrangements brought admiration from many of his contemporaries.

**Richard Bock**, founder of Pacific Jazz Records in 1952, died of a heart attack February 6 in Los Angeles. He was 61. Born in Syracuse, NY, he was raised in Wisconsin, eventually settling in the L.A. area in the 1940s. With Pacific Jazz, Bock recorded such greats as Buddy Rich, Les McCann, Jean-Luc Ponty, Gerald Wilson, George Duke, Gerry Mulligan, and Chico Hamilton. Bock sold the label to Liberty Records in the mid-'60s, the name being changed to World Pacific. He stayed on as an a&r man. He went on to work with Ravi Shankar, L. Subramanian, and Ali Akbar Khan at World Pacific. With Shankar he founded the Ravi Shankar Music Circle, promoting classical Indian music. In addition to producing a number of documentaries, Bock's most recent work involved the production of jazz albums for Fantasy. Frank Morgan, Buddy DeFranco, Terry Gibbs, and Barney Kessel were among those he produced.

**Don Patterson**, jazz organist, died February 10 of complications at age 51 in Philadelphia, PA. He was born in Columbus, Ohio July 22, 1936 and started studying piano at age seven, years later switching to organ after hearing Jimmy Smith perform. Patterson had grown into an accomplished bebop organist playing more in a piano style executing bop horn lines. He was known to have an affinity for ballads as well as hard swinging. Patterson and long-time companion, drummer Billy James, worked with jazz great Sonny Stitt from 1960-1969. Guitarist Pat Martino was closely associated with Patterson and James, working and recording with them. Patterson also worked and recorded with Gene Ammons, Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis, Sonny Rollins, Al Gray, Jimmy Forrest, Blue Mitchell, Junior Cook, Booker Ervin, and Charlie Rouse. Patterson recorded for the Prestige and Muse labels.

**Ray Bauduc**, 81, died January 8 in Houston. Best-known for co-writing two of the biggest hits of the big band era, Bauduc rose to prominence during that period as a drummer as well. With bassist Bob Haggart, his companion in Bob Crosby's Bobcats, he wrote the hits *Big Noise From Winnetka* and *South Rampart Street Parade*.

# Dotpourki



ROGER KENNA

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**F**est news: the 19th annual **New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival** will be held 4/22-5/1. Those featured include Michael Brecker, Wayne Shorter, Robert Cray, and Los Lobos. For more info call (800)535-5151 ... jazz studies: the **Banff Center's** lineup for the 1988 Jazz Workshop includes Dave Holland, John Abercrombie, Julian Priester, and Kenny Wheeler. The workshop is designed for post-graduate and professional-level players, with an emphasis on individual creativity, improvisation, and composition. Dates: 6/20-

7/15. For more info, contact the Banff Center, Box 1020, Banff, Alberta, Canada T0L 0C0 ... summer jazz: Northwest Community College's 1988 **Yellowstone Jazz Camp** will be held 7/10-15. Nestled in the Beartooth Mountains and adjacent to Yellowstone National Park, the camp will feature music education courses, workshops, and performance—all related to jazz. For musicians ages 13 to 80, contact Neil Hansen, Director Yellowstone Jazz Camp, Northwest Community College,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 61

## 135 JAZZ/ELECTRONIC ENSEMBLES QUALIFY FOR MUSICFEST USA NATIONAL FINALS

**CHICAGO**—As of March 7, 135 of this country's top jazz and electronic amateur ensembles have qualified to participate at the National Finals of the second annual Musicfest U.S.A. The ensembles earned their invitations via successful participation at one of the Musicfest U.S.A.'s 50 affiliate qualifying festivals or by submitting a tape to **down beat** for adjudication.

With more than 20 affiliate qualifying festivals yet to be held, it's expected that another 100 groups will earn invitations to the National Finals.

**down beat** congratulates all of the ensembles that have qualified (list below) so far and we are looking forward to meeting you in Orlando, FL May 4-7 at the National Finals.

### AFFILIATE FESTIVAL QUALIFIERS

**CLOVIS JAZZ FESTIVAL CLOVIS, CA:** Roosevelt High School—SB 2B, Fresno, CA; Clovis High School—SB 2A, Clovis, CA; McClane High School—SB 2A, Fresno, CA; Clayton Valley High School—SB 2A, Concord, CA; Kingsburg High School—SB 2A, Kingsburg, CA; Roosevelt High School Studio—SB 2B, Fresno, CA. **THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA JAZZ FESTIVAL ATHENS, GA:** Stone Mountain High School—SB 2A, Stone Mountain, GA. **ILLINOIS WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY JAZZ FESTIVAL BLOOMINGTON, IL:** Rolling Meadows High School—Stage Band, Rolling Meadows, IL. **AUGUSTANA JAZZ FESTIVAL ROCK ISLAND, IL:** Valparaiso High School—Stage Band Valparaiso, IN; Naperville North High School—Stage Band, Naperville, IL; North Scott High School—SB 3A, Eldridge, IA. **ELMHURST COLLEGE JAZZ FESTIVAL ELMHURST, IL:** Capital University Jazz Ensemble, Capital University Jazz Combo, University of Illinois 2nd Band, Central Michigan University, Bowling Green State University Jazz Combo, University of Mary Jazz Combo, Bowling Green State University Jazz Band. **TALL-CORN JAZZ FESTIVAL CEDAR FALLS, IA:** Roosevelt High School—SB 3A, Des Moines, IA; Hoover High School—SB 3A, Des Moines, IA; Dowling High School—SB 3A, West Des Moines, IA; Marshalltown High School—SB 3A, Marshalltown, IA; Gilbert Community High School—SB 3A, Gilbert, IA; Oskaloosa High School—SB 3A, Oskaloosa, IA. **16th ANNUAL JAZZ & STUDIO MUSIC CLINIC MOREHEAD STATE UNIVERSITY MOREHEAD, KY:** Russell High School—SB 1A, Russell, KY. **MILLIKIN UNIVERSITY JAZZ FESTIVAL DECATUR, IL:** Carthage High School—SB 3A, Carthage, IL; Woodruff High School—SB 3A, Peoria, IL; Lake Forest High School—SB 3A, Lake Forest, IL; Central High School—SB 3A, Cape Girardeau, MO; MacArthur High School—SB 3A, Decatur, IL. **JAZZ IN THE MEADOWS ROLLING MEADOWS, IL:** Glenbard South High School Jazz Ensemble, Glen Ellyn, IL; Decatur MacArthur High School Jazz Ensemble, Decatur, IL; Prospect High School Jazz Band, Mt. Prospect, IL; Barrington High School Rhythm Machine, Barrington, IL; New Trier HS Jazz Ensemble 1, Winnetka, IL; Gemini Jr. High Jazz Band, Niles, IL. **HIGH SCHOOL JAZZ ENSEMBLE FESTIVAL BERKLEE COLLEGE OF MUSIC BOSTON, MA:** Cherry Hill High School East—SB 3A, Cherry Hill, NJ; Overbrook Regional Senior High School—SB 3A, Pine Hill, NJ; Newington High School—SB 3A, Newington, CT; Andover High School—JC 3A, Andover, MA. **GLASSBORO STATE COLLEGE JAZZ FESTIVAL GLASSBORO, NJ:** University of the Arts—Jazz—Stage Band, Philadelphia, PA; Centre Dimension—Stage Band, Penn State University University Park, PA; Overbrook Regional Sr. HS—Stage Band, Pine Hill, NJ; Princeton HS Studio Band #1—Stage Band, Princeton, NJ; Newark HS—Stage Band, Newark, DE; Pennsauken

HS—Stage Band, Pennsauken, NJ; Pennsauken High School—Stage Band, Fairless Hills, PA. **UNIVERSITY OF MARY JAZZ FESTIVAL BISMARCK, ND:** Mandan High School—SB 2A, Mandan, ND; Bismark Century High School—SB 2A, Bismark, ND; Hardin High School—SB 2A, Hardin, MT; Grand Forks Central High School—SB 2A, Grand Forks, ND. **NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY JAZZ FESTIVAL:** Lincoln Jr. High—SB 3A, El Paso, TX; Picacho Jazz Band—SB 3A, Las Cruces, NM; Hanks High Jazz Band—SB 2A, El Paso, TX. **LINCOLN UNIVERSITY JAZZ FESTIVAL LINCOLN, PA:** North Penn Jr. High—SB 4A, Overbrook Regional Senior High School—JC 3A, Newark High School—SB 3A, Pennsauken High School—SB 3A, Upper Darby High School—SB 3A. **BYU JAZZ FESTIVAL BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY PROVO, UT:** Mountain Crest High School—SB 3A, Mountain View High School—SB 3A, Orem High School—SB 3A, Skyline High School—SB 3A, Woods Cross High School—SB 3A. **UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN WHITEWATER JAZZ FESTIVAL WHITEWATER, WI:** J.I.K. Case High School, Racine, WI; Cudahy High School, Cudahy, WI; Brookfield Central High School, Brookfield, WI; Badger High School, Lake Geneva, WI; Whitewater High School, Whitewater, WI; Market University High School, Milwaukee, WI; Mundalain College. **WINTERFEST LACROSSE, WI:** LaCrescent High School, LaCrescent, MN; Eisenhower High School, New Berlin, WI; Valley Middle School, Rosemount, MN; Stevens Points High School. **NORTHWEST JAZZ FESTIVAL POWELL, WY:** Mandan High School—SB 3A, Mandan, ND; Riverton Jazz Ensemble—SB 3A, Riverton, WY; Cheyenne Centralaires—SB 3A, Cheyenne, WY; Jazz-On-Top—SB 3A, Riverton, WY. **TAPE QUALIFIERS:** 1st Street—JC 1B, Jacksonville, FL; All Phila. Jazz Ensemble—SB 3B, Philadelphia, PA; All Philadel. Jazz Trio—JC 3A, Philadelphia, PA; Arts Magnet HS Jazz Combo—JC 2A, Dallas, TX; Arts Magnet HS Lab Band—SB 2B, Dallas, TX; Arts Magnet HS Lab Singers—JC 2B, Dallas, TX; Blues Alley Youth Orches.—SB 1B, Washington, DC; Brooks Jr. HS Jazz Band—SB 4A, Harvey, IL; C.T.B. Band—JC 1B, St. Louis, MO; Cal Arts Jazz Ensemble—JC 1A, Valencia, CA; Career Ed. Cent. Citywide—JC 2A, Denver, CO; Cawthra Park Second. Sch.—VJ 2A, Mississauga, Ontario; Central HS Jazz Combo—JC 3A, Philadelphia, PA; Clark College Jazz Orches—SB 1B, Atlanta, GA; Clearminds—EC 1A, Denton, TX; Decatur MacArthur HS Jazz—SB 3A, Decatur, IL; District Authority—EC 1B, Centreville, VA; Faction—JC 1B, Charlotte, NC; Florida Southern College—SB 1B, Lakeland, FL; Gillett Jazz Band—SB 4A, Kingsville, TX; Glassboro State College—SB 1A, Glassboro, NJ; Holmes Jr HS Swing Chorus—JC 4A, Mt. Prospect, IL; Interplay—JC 3A, Reston, VA; Interplay—EC 3A; Lakelands Northcoast Rhyt—JC 1A, Lakeland Community College, Mentor, OH; Leo Jazz Ensemble—SB 3A, Leo, IN; Lexington High School—JC 3A, Lexington, MA; Light Years—EC 1B, Philadelphia, PA; Mark Keppel HS Aztec Jazz—SB 3A, Alhambra, CA; MCPS Jazz A I Stars—SB 3B, Silver Spring, MD; Mount St. Joseph College—SB 2A, Baltimore, MD; Muskegon Catholic Central—SB 3A, Muskegon, MI; Muskegon Catholic Etc. Co.—EC 3A, Muskegon, MI; Newton HS Jazz Ensemble I—SB 3A, Newton, KS; Norwood HS Jazz Ensemble—SB 3A, Norwood, MA; Oakland Vocal Jazz Ensem.—VC 2A, Rochester, MI; Out of Bounds—JC 4A, Harvey, IL; Palantonio/Smith—JC 1B, Hudson, NC; Phoebus HS Jazz Combo—JC 2A, Hampton, VA; Phoebus HS Jazz Ensemble—SB 2A, Hampton, VA; Pick "C"—EC 1A, Morgantown, WV; Ping—EC 1B, Buller, NJ; Roundabout—JC 2A, Cheshire, CT; South Lakes Jazz Ensemble—SB 3A, Reston, VA; Unifour Jazz Ensemble—SB 1B, Caldwell Comm. College; Wayne State Combo—JC 2A, Detroit, MI; Weatherford College Jazz—SB 1A, Weatherford, TX; Wolfgang Muthspiel Trio—JC 1A, Boston, MA; The UMES Jazz Ensemble—SB 1B, Princess Anne, MD; Two Plus Three—EC 1B, Sharon Hill, PA; U. of Mass Amherst Jazz En—SB 1A, Amherst, MA; U. of Mass Amherst Jazz Tr—JC 1A, Amherst, MA; St. Joe's Jazz Lab Band—SB 3A, Buffalo, NY; St. Peter's Prep Stage BD—JC 3A, Jesse City, NJ; Stanford Quartet—JC 1A, Stanford, CA; Stanford Quintet—JC 1A, Stanford, CA.

## LES PAUL

**S**o what's up with Les? More than you'd imagine.

"I'm doing a million things," says the 71-year-old Lester Polfus (a.k.a. Les Paul). "I'm playing every Monday at Fat Tuesday's in Manhattan with my trio. Been there for four years now and you can't get in the place it's so crowded, so I'm happy about that. The place is full of guitar players every Monday night, which is a ball. And then I'm doing a lot of guest shots—*Letterman*, *Saturday Night Live*. CBS was out shooting all day yesterday. Charles Osgood is doing a segment on me.

"And, believe it or not, I'm number one in China right now. I got the number one record over there in *Nola*. Who'd believed it?"

Add to this flurry of activity the fact that Les was recently inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall Of Fame (see **db**, Apr. '88) for his contributions over the years as both an inventor and guitarist. And the Smithsonian Institute is laying claim to a lot of historic hardware and gadgetry lying around his New Jersey household.

"Yeah, the Smithsonian is taking a bunch of my stuff . . . 50 guitars of different models I've made over the years, including the first solid



EBET ROBERTS

body I made back in 1934."

While Les 's being feted at the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C., he's busy digging into his personal archives for a few items he plans to re-release soon. "I have 170 shows that Mary (Ford) and I did on tv in the '50s. They're five-minute shows where we do two

numbers on each show, just Mary and I sitting around the house, playing guitars and singing. We did those shows for Listerine for seven years. We're rigging it up now to have them available as videos in stores."

And that's not all. Les has got plenty more plans for the rest of the year. He'll be releasing his very first multi-track radio shows on CD. "Mary and I had a 15-minute show on NBC for about four years and I have all those tapes and discs and acetates. They're very clean. That's where *How High The Moon* came from, and *Tiger Rag* and *Smoke Rings*. And they'll sound great on CD. Capitol will be putting those out."

And, of course, there are still the inventions. Les is now working with Gibson on some new designs for a whole new line of solid-body guitars that will incorporate high-tech electronics to allow the player to change amplifier settings from switches on the guitar itself. "Gibson has given me the green light to go ahead on this. And this will be a big step forward. It'll be a marriage between the guitar and the amplifier. Nowadays, a guy is going over to his amplifier . . . he has to walk halfway off the stage to change his sounds. But with the new microchip technology we have now, it's all at his fingertips."

—bill milkowski

## BRUCE COCKBURN

"I abandoned rock music for quite awhile," explains virtuoso guitarist, singer/songwriter Bruce Cockburn. "I rediscovered it when I got interested in exploring the possibilities of rhythm in my music. I hadn't taken rock seriously since 1969. But when I discovered punk—with its energy, edge, and meaning—and reggae, I committed myself to music that makes your body want to move."

The 42-year old Cockburn has garnered the raves of music critics as well as small, but committed audiences in Japan, Germany, Italy, and most recently the U.S. However, in his native Canada, Cockburn is well-known and has accumulated several Juno Awards (the Canadian equivalent of the Grammys) since his first folkie LPs in the early '70s. Subsequent records (Cockburn has cut 17 in a 17-year span) have seen Cockburn expanding his musical vision to include blues, jazz, Caribbean, and latin styles.

Originally influenced by rocking guitarists Dwayne Eddy and Richie Valens, Cockburn studied under a teacher who was interested in country swing and Les Paul and who "exposed me to a quasi-jazz element that gave me a broadened approach to harmony." Cockburn dug deeper into jazz by reading about it, eventually heading to Boston after high school to attend the Berklee School of Music. His dream was to become a jazz guitarist, but, Cockburn recalls, "I ended up getting sidetracked on pursuing straight jazz. It was the mid '60s, and half the students at Berklee were exploring Indian,

Tibetan, and Arabic styles. That experimentation and to the improvisation basic to jazz, really appealed to me."

When Cockburn returned to Canada, he played solo folk gigs, touring Canada in a trailer and often performing with his dog at his feet. He eventually reached a point musically where he "felt competent enough on guitar to just sit in the same room with other jazz musicians." Cockburn claims, "Although at no point did I feel I was playing jazz, the band that backed me definitely added a jazz flavor to my music." This is most apparent in his 1976 LP *In the Falling Dark*, which caught the attention of jazz enthusiasts in Europe and Japan. Last year's singles compilation double-LP *Waiting For A Miracle* (Gold Castle 171005-1) contains material from 1970 to 1986.

In addition to the obvious rock emphasis in most of Cockburn's latest albums, the jazz influence has been present, most notably in the contributions of band members Jon Goldsmith on keyboards, Michael Alan White on trumpet and flugelhorn, and Fergus Marsh on stick. In addition to listening to new material by REM, 10,000 Maniacs, U2, and Ry Cooder ("It's so bop-til-you-drop, yet so current."), Cockburn also listens to a fair amount of jazz. He says, "I've always liked Miles Davis and James Blood Ulmer, and Mingus' *Tijuana Moods* and Coltrane's *A Love Supreme* are perennial favorites. I recently bought a CD player and have been collecting re-releases of the old Blue Note classics."

Currently, Cockburn has been doing a solo tour that has taken him to Northern Europe, Canada, and the U.S. Asserting that the rationale behind the tour is "to take a break



from the rigors of travelling with a band, Cockburn adds that he plans to return to the studio soon with a group of musicians to work on a batch of new tunes. "I've written four new songs in and about Nepal which is where I spent last April and part of May. The landscape there is certainly conducive to creativity. As far as the musical direction of the record, I sense a change from the last albums. These songs feel different. Yet I plan to continue exploring the guitar and stick combination Fergus and I have been working on in the last few years. What the record will sound like is hard to tell until we hit the studio. But whatever direction it goes, there will be some changes. I'd like to think that each record will offer something new musically."

—dan ouellette



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\*MC802 with eight channels retails at \$845.00; the MC1202 with 12 channels at \$1,145.00; and the MC1602 with 16 channels for \$1,345.00. Suggested retail prices.



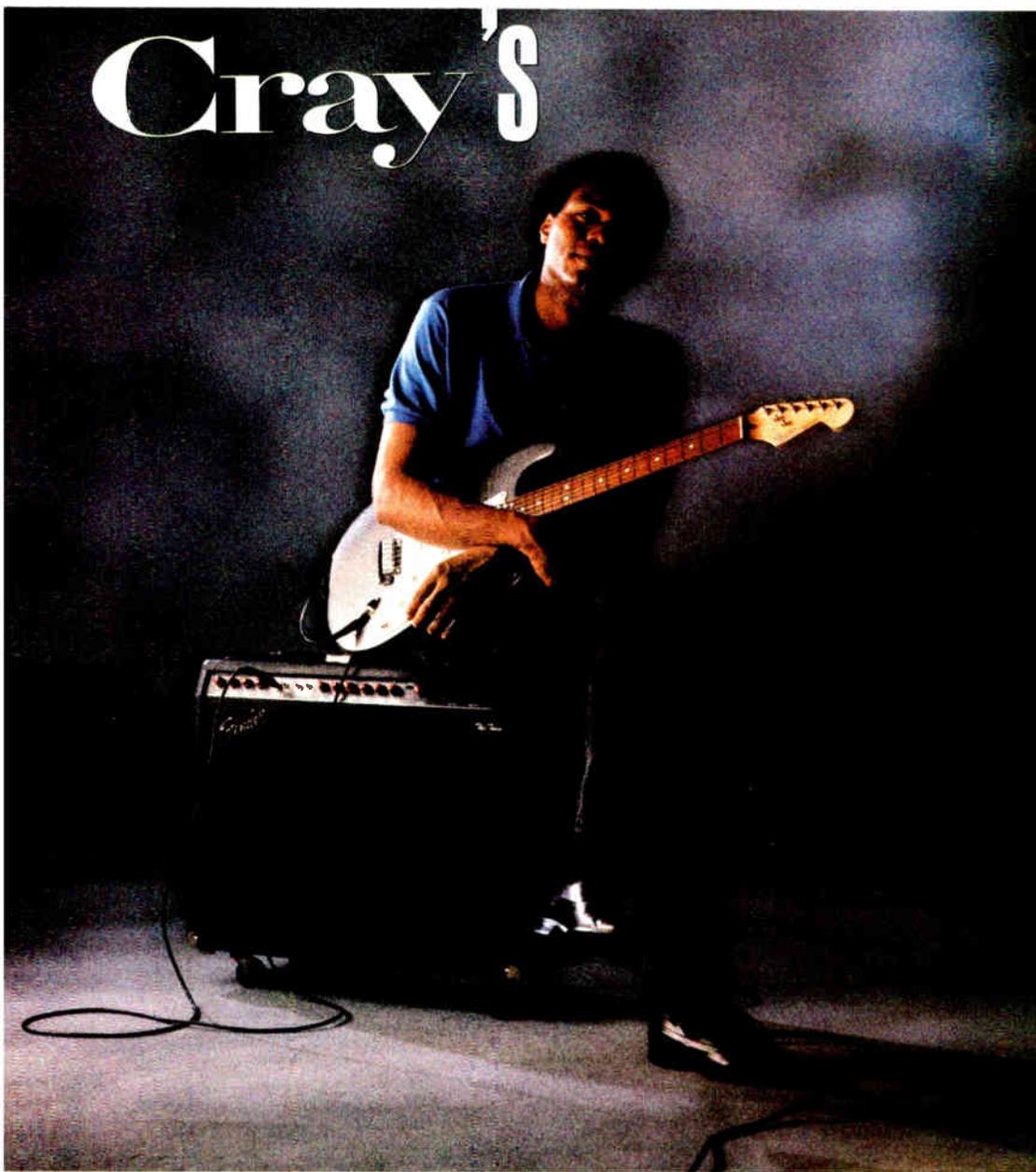
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# Robert

# Cray's

It's no surprise to see Robert Cray on the cover of a music magazine. The handsome, still-boyish face of this bonafide double-threat guitarist/vocalist is raved about by his buddies Stevie Ray Vaughn, Huey Lewis, and Eric Clapton. Now instead of holes, he's performing in Halls with a capitol H, and there's a new generation of people growing up saying, "Uh, yeah dude, I like the blues. You know, C-R-A-Y."

HEART  
FULL  
OF  
SOUL



COURTESY OF FENDER GUITAR

By Robin Tolleason

Cray is to blues what Yellowjackets is to jazz—close enough. Robert bought his first guitar after hearing the Beatles, and he's made economy and pop tastefulness a part of his music as well. It's also tempered with the Stax groove and spirit of Steve Cropper. But when you hear the lyin' and cheatin' lyrics you know it's the blues. "You don't find too many happy, happy songs in the stuff we do, even though sometimes nobody's really sad about anything as far as relationships go. I'm not quarreling with my girlfriend right now. But you can still get inspiration from past situations, ideas for songs. Songs to recognize that you're not the only one in the

situation, and then hopefully it'll make you feel better," says the 35-year-old guitarist.

Something of a globe-trotter, Robert Cray's ears have been wide open wherever he's lived. When his father was in the service and stationed in Germany, Robert would sit up late by his bedroom door and listen to the music his parents played at parties. When the family lived in Virginia, he swallowed up the great variety of music to be heard on their AM radio. By the time he went to high school in Oregon, there was a guitarist from the Pacific Northwest named Jimi Hendrix, another big influence.

"In Germany my father was buying records at the PX on the army base. We couldn't understand German radio or television, so we listened to Armed Forces radio and all the records my dad would pick up—New Orleans music, the pop and soul of the time, jazz, and gospel records. When I lived in Virginia from 1966 to '68 we heard a lot more of the r&b thing. Stax was starting to get strong, so there were soul stations there, which there weren't a lot of in the Northwest. You had a lot of that good soul and gospel on the radio."

It was toward the end of his high school days that Cray started a band playing a similar musical blend to what he's doing today. "Our bands were a combination of rock & roll and soul. In the latter part of high school everybody was playing guitars and listening to B.B. King and Buddy Guy and stealing all the licks."

Cray's bassist, Richard Cousins, remembers hearing one of Robert's first bands in Tacoma. "They were playing strictly Stax and r&b, Albert Collins, playing pretty much the style of music we play now. At the height of disco in '71 or '72, these guys were playing *Hip Hugger*, so there wasn't a lot of work for them."

Cousins first met Cray at a jam session in an outdoor park in Tacoma. They liked the sounds they heard that day, but now they just kid each other about the clothes they were wearing at the time. "I turned around when I heard him playing and said, 'God, that can't be coming out of *him*,'" the bassist laughs. "It was the attire of the time. But Robert sounded the same as he does now. I'm serious. I guess it's gotten better, but to me it sounded the same as it does now."

Cousins and Cray have been inseparable ever since. And as anyone who's seen the band knows, the bassist is a very positive and consistent force. "Robert and I sat by the side of many a freeway together," says Cousins, referring to a time when they had to hitchhike to rehearsals—70 miles from Eugene to Salem, Oregon. Support from home helped in the early days. "Both sets of parents were very adept listeners to music, so we had good input for a band. The first Robert Cray Trio would play like original Chicago gutbucket blues, and then we'd blow a bad James Brown medley in the same set."

Drummer David Olson met Cray in his hometown of Eugene in 1976, and started playing with him a couple years later. "Robert was doing Little Milton stuff and Otis Rush, and he and Richard were writing too, writing along those lines. They were bad, they were real funky back then too. I can remember getting chills a few times watching them."

**T**he Robert Cray Band honed its act in the Pacific Northwest, and by playing up and down Interstate 5 from Vancouver to L.A. They toured the West Coast opening for Albert Collins between 1976 and '78, and started gathering steam on a national level. In the early days it was 300 nights a year, three and four sets a night. Now the number is *down* to about 250 nights a year.

Cray was re-united with mentor Collins and Johnny Copeland on an album called *Showdown* in 1986. "Albert brought Johnny Copeland to the scene down in Texas, and he did the same thing for me when we worked together on the West Coast. It was like Albert and his two underlings. We had a lot of fun. It was almost like the three stooges or something, all the way up to the point where we walked up the stairs to receive our Grammy award and nobody wanted to go first. We almost bumped into each other. That was the atmosphere when we did the record. Albert Collins

would turn his back to us when he was soloing so we couldn't see what he was doing. We couldn't understand it anyway because of his tuning."

From Collins, Cray not only learned a percussive, string-plucking technique, but something about being a bandleader as well. "Robert's not easily satisfied or impressed," says Cousins. "He's not a dictator or anything, he just knows what he wants. You have input, you're allowed your opinion. It's good. I call the show onstage, and I'm the band liaison with (manager) Mike Kappus. But if I call a song and he says 'No,' and I call it again later and he says 'No,' I don't call it again. He's definitely the boss."

"Robert's really easy to play with, because he's a sensitive listener, and he's aware of what's going on all the time. So there's a lot of empathy between the two of us," says Peter Boe, who's known Cray since 1979, and been playing keyboards full-time with him since '83.

Boe adds, "I'm aware of my position in this band, which is basically to lay down an unobtrusive but appropriate harmonic climate for him. On the new record we're expanding my sound palate a little bit. There's obviously no room for ref's whistles, and frog noises in this band in terms of synthesizer sounds, but we are getting a little more adventurous in layering synth sounds."

As the keyboardist explains, the new Cray record will have a lot more input from the band members than before. Thanks to a couple of months off this year, they've actually had some time to write. "In the past our producers, Bruce Bromberg and Dennis Walker, have done a lot of the writing. We're usually on the road so much that when it would come time to do a record we'd show up in the studio with basically nothing. So we'd learn a bunch of their tunes, and if we had any scraps of material ourselves we'd try to work those into shape. This time we were more prepared, and I think we're going to make a much better album as a result."

"We got a chance to rehearse for awhile. It was nice to finally do that. This was our first break in touring for awhile, actually our first big one ever," laughs Cray. "We thought we'd cool down a little bit, put some writing in, our own personal ideas."

**T**he Robert Cray band is bonded and time-tested. They're certainly not an overnight success, but that's probably made them stronger. It's kind of a luxury to have a band that's stayed together that long. "You know when you want to step out and take a chance on something different within a song you can do that, because everybody can read you pretty well. You don't have to worry about everybody. The band locks into its own groove," says the bandleader.

"In that respect we're very, very lucky," says Olson. "I'm not saying our success is lucky, although there's luck involved in anything in the music business. But we are lucky in the sense that we have been together and we all still like each other very much. Robert's been very good to me personally, because he's had a lot of people come at him over the years, and he's pretty much stuck by me as his drummer. He and I might have had some differences about time or something, but that, to me and I'm sure to him, is healthy. We talk about it, we don't argue about it."

Olson and Cousins work out certain rhythmic hooks in the music, which take on great importance in the groove. "I always liked section guys," says the bassist. "Jackson and Dunn, Jamieson and Benjamin, Hawkins and Hood. I liked the bass player *and* the drummer. The stuff that Duck and Al did probably drives me the craziest."

"When David and I come up with a part, we try to make sure that the kids who are singing along with the record know it's a part. So when you hear the song it's a bass line that *has* to be played. We put the holes and punches in the same place every time. But also a lot of it's because we've just been playing together a long time."

There are a lot of good memories from the Cray band's decade of touring and performing. The drummer recalls the group being in Montana and having a gig booked at the Milwaukee Summer

## THE ROBERT CRAY BAND'S EQUIPMENT

"I use Fender Stratocasters, and I play through a Fender Super Reverb," says the guitarist, who adds that there's been no doctoring done to his axe. "I'm just a plain old guy. I just go straight into the amplifier, put a dash of reverb on there, and hey, you're making music. I use a Super Reverb, and sometimes I connect it to a Twin Reverb. I don't use any special effects. I use pretty heavy picks. I do put my own set of strings together. I use D'Addario strings, starting with .011, .013, .018, .028, .036, and .046. I can't use strings any lighter. I'm just used to playing heavier strings because I like the fight back. My strings aren't set too close to the fingerboard because I have to get underneath them sometimes to pluck."

Richard Cousins is also a Fender fan. "I use this Jazz bass that's specially made. I like J basses basically, but I have a P too. I've been using a five-string on some of the record—Fender's making me one so I can use it live. I'm kind of pissed-off at the world for not starting us off on five-strings, because now we've got to learn how to play these things. It's really wild, I think it's great, but now I've got to think about it when I play it. I use a Guild/Hartke cabinet, and I use bunches of different power amps: Ampeg, Seymour Duncan, or Fender, depending on the playing. The crew likes to use the Seymour Duncan because it's very quiet." Cousins also eschews special effects. "When I see a bass player with pedals, I get scared."

Peter Boe's equipment is changing a little. "I still use my basic, what some people would consider primitive, [Yamaha] DX-7 at this point. And I have a Roland RD-1000 digital piano, but I'm going to add on to that real soon. The Emulator 3 looks pretty good." Boe gets his classy organ-bed sounds from the DX-7. "The DX doesn't sound like a B-3, but they certainly have advantages in portability."

David Olson plays a Pearl drumset, with a 22-inch base drum, 12-inch, 13-inch, and 16-inch toms. His cymbals are Zildjian, a 20-inch ride, 16-inch crash, and New Beat hi-hats.

## ROBERT CRAY DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader

**STRONG PERSUADER**—Mercury/High

Tone 830 568-1 M-1

**FALSE ACCUSATIONS**—High Tone 8005

**BAD INFLUENCE**—High Tone 8001

**WHO'S BEEN TALKIN'**—Charly CRB 1140

**L.A. BLUES ALL NIGHT LONG**—P-Vine  
9050

with Albert Collins and  
Johnny Copeland

**SHOWDOWN**—Alligator 4743



PHOTO BY YOU VIELZ

Fest. "We'd never been out there. We were trying to go east and play for the people there. So we drove for two days, played for 45 minutes, collected our money and drove for two days back to Missoula. It was like, here we are, a band, people sleeping in the back, dirty feet in your face, card games. That was definitely a trip where we went out together as a band, and said, 'Hey man, we're doing it, let's go.' We just had to do it. We were all really into the idea of going to the Midwest and playing for these thousands of people."

In the light of the countless W.C. Handy Awards he's won, the Grammy, the media coverage, and the success in the latest *db* Reader's Poll (Dec. '87), maybe some of the tough experiences in the past don't seem as bad now to Cray. "We've played some weird clubs, where people shouted out things like, 'Is that another song by a nigger?' Something like that. And we'd play an Elmore James tune and say it was something by the Doobie Brothers. Have some fun with it. And nobody would know the difference."

Cray has always been open-minded musically, and that's why his strand of blues shows a bit more pop, soul, and funk than traditional blues does. "For guitarists or any other instrumentalists, I'd just say listen to whatever you can. Listen to all kinds of music. It's really nice that people are listening to the blues. It's good American music. Be aware of what's going on around you, there's a lot of good music out there. That's the responsibility of a musician. You don't have to like everything, but you should give everything a chance."

"I listen to guitar players. I listen to piano players. I like Thelonious Monk a whole lot. I listen to him because he's just off in his own world playing, and I like that. I like listening to all kinds of different instruments or vocalists, good things by any instrumentalist."

**W**ith the completion of his second album for Polygram, Cray has noticed a change in his own playing. "I'm trying to slow down some," he explains. "Make every note count. I've been listening to some of the playbacks, soloing on the work tracks and giving a listen to what it sounds like. The

first thing I'd say is you've got to slow down and get back in the swing, back in the groove. You've got to go over your stuff, take a different look at it. My dad used to tell me all the time, 'Take your time, take your time. You're playing too much.'"

When Cray solos he tries to make it work in the context of the song's lyrics. Listen to him rip over the slow groove at the end of *New Blood* [from *Strong Persuader*]. He explains, "Well, the song says you've got to find new blood, and at the end you get a little excited and start going for it, trying to make your point."

He rarely ever composes a solo in advance of playing it. "There might be a couple different takes of the song, and each song will have a different solo. I don't like to work anything out. After it's recorded there might be some similarities to the solo when I play it onstage. I don't like to play the same solo. I always try to get something different, still playing the song, and not just playing the solo for the sake of playing a solo."

During his time off, Cray had the chance to expand his library of CDs. "They had a sale on Blue Note stuff, so I picked up *The Jazz Messengers Live At The Cafe Bohemia*, Wayne Shorter's *Speak No Evil*, Jackie McLean's *Let Freedom Ring*, Sonny Clark's *Cool Struttin'*. I'm picking up all this old jazz reissue stuff before they quit making it. And there are a lot of blues CDs coming out, Elmore James and Freddie King, Little Walter, and stuff like that. I'm buying whatever I can."

Listening is a passive sport, however, and Robert Cray is an active man. A player. "I'm just trying to get this record out, and I want to go back to work. I gotta go back to work. It was nice, real nice to take a break like this, but I gotta go back to work." Remember, it's been 10 years just about non-stop for Cray on the road. Says Peter Boe, "If I feel the antsy-ness coming on after a month or so of being off, for Robert it must be doubly bad, because he's done it forever."

"I've gotta get back in the routine, I gotta work," says Cray. "I want to play my guitar more often. I got the itch. Like the song says, 'When the dust hits my shoes. I've got the urge to move.' I like looking at the country and playing for different people. I'm jumpy to get back at it." **db**

# Bill WATROUS

## HORN O' MELODY

By Scott Yanow

**B**ack in 1975 when Bill Watrous was last interviewed for **down beat** (June 5), the trombonist was leading the Manhattan Wildlife Refuge, Gerald Ford was president, and new albums cost five dollars. Thirteen years later, five dollar LPs have been succeeded by 15 dollar CDs, former President Ford is eligible for American Express commercials, and Bill Watrous (now an L.A. resident) has his second record out for Patrick Williams' label Soundwings. "I'm very happy with the last two albums," states Watrous. "Patrick Williams has a great skill in being able to favorably showcase an artist. As a writer Patrick is the greatest accompanist I've ever worked for; he arranges like Ross Tompkins plays piano. It's totally impossible not to sound good with his backgrounds.

"I met Patrick Williams back in 1960," recalls Watrous. "He listened to me play with a rehearsal band, liked what he heard and then started calling me for dates; jingles at first and then his records for Verve. I was featured on *Think Pat Williams*, *Head Vibrations*, and *Shades Of The Day*. That touched off a lot of opportunities for me. People started to think of me as a soloist rather than as a sideman."

Watrous renewed his ties with Williams after his move to Los Angeles in 1976, participating in the arranger's *Dreams And Things* album and becoming one of the first artists to sign with Soundwings. The trombonist's debut for the label, *Someplace Else*, was quite unusual for the 1980's because it was recorded totally live. "I wish my dad had been alive to hear that one," regrets Watrous. "I was backed by an 89-piece

ADAM WARD SELIGMAN

orchestra and my dad's dream had always been to be backed by a symphony orchestra. It was really a challenge to record live. The atmosphere was electrifying. Everyone knew that each tune would be given just one or two rundowns before we went for it. *Someplace Else* took exactly three days to record; two days for the full orchestra pieces and one for the tunes I did with just the rhythm section."

Watrous' most recent album, *Reflections*, features music that often falls into the category of easy listening jazz. Backed by a fine rhythm section, an occasional string section, and three trumpets (including veteran Snooky Young), Watrous' fluid trombone is in splendid form, particularly on a spirited version of Michael Camilo's *Why Not*.

The most surprising aspect to this album is that Watrous makes his debut as a whistler (on *Street Of Dreams* and the *Slap Maxwell Theme*, and as a vocalist on *Dear Bix*). "I'd been doing whistling and vocals for years," recalls Watrous, "but I'd never been in a position where I could suggest they be recorded. In recent times I've spent weekends jamming dixieland with trumpeter Jackie Coon, a fantastic musician who deserves much greater recognition, and we'd both get to sing. It entered my mind that I should record a vocal someday, so I started bugging Patrick Williams about wanting to sing and whistle on my next record. He would say 'OK OK' and change the subject. But I bugged him for such a long time that he figured I was serious, so he had me make a test record. Using Ross Tompkins as my accompanist, I recorded a few things and Patrick was happily surprised.

"I chose *Dear Bix* for my vocal," adds Watrous, "because I remember when Dave Frishberg wrote it and I've always liked that song. The mystique surrounding Bix Beiderbecke has always fascinated me. He was such a marvelous musician, way ahead of his time. Yet being his own strongest critic, he was probably his own worst enemy. The song also interested me because Bix was an associate of my father, who played in territory bands around Cincinnati and crossed paths with Bix a little."

**D**ue to his father being a professional trombonist, there was always music around the Watrous home in Middletown, Connecticut where Bill was born June 8, 1939. "The earliest music I remember," reminisced Watrous, "was my dad and a piano player rehearsing in our living room. On the radio I used to hear many live broadcasts of big bands. Nearby at Ocean Beach Park there was a big ballroom that the touring bands regularly played. I was

taken to see many of them, including Count Basie, Woody Herman, Harry James, Lionel Hampton, Benny Goodman. I'd think to myself, 'Someday I'd love to play like that!'

"I first played the trombone when I was five, before I started going to school. My dad always left a couple of what we'd call 'dummy' horns around the house so I could experiment. It was never pushed on me to play the trombone. In fact, my mother wanted me to be a doctor. My father didn't think that I'd be dedicated enough to be a musician since I actually preferred sports and really wanted to play baseball. He never really sat down and explained the instrument to me. I totally learned the trombone by watching and listening.

"My father, Ralph Watrous, played locally when I was growing up. He was a casualty of the Great Depression and never really got back into the mainstream of music again. He played vaudeville shows, was briefly with Paul Whiteman, and had a wonderful embouchure but I don't think his temperament was right for the music business."

Watrous played in his high school swing band and his first professional job was with a local concert orchestra performing marches and overtures. Although he says that his mind was totally involved with music, Watrous did take time off for another activity: "I played on my high school football team as a field goal specialist but our team was so scuzzy that we never got close enough for me to get a chance to kick. In fact, we never even scored a touchdown!"

By the time he'd finished school, Watrous was performing steadily in bands ranging from society groups to dixieland combos. "Word got around that I knew tunes and soon I was playing with other musicians two or three times my age. That was the best training, learning from other musicians. I eventually enlisted in the Navy, which was a good move for me because I had goofed off a lot in high school due to only concentrating on music. I put myself in a position where if I didn't become a musician I would have been in a lot of trouble."

Watrous spent a largely rewarding four-year period in the Navy, playing both military music and jazz steadily throughout his tour of duty. He spent a period of time stationed in San Diego where he gigged (against Navy regulations) at a club under a pseudonym. "Then I was transferred to the Brooklyn Navy Yard. I started playing these dixieland gigs in Greenwich Village in 1959, mostly at the Riviera. I actually shared three jobs with Roswell Rudd and Eph Resnick. Eph would sometimes fill in for Cutty Cutshall, Roswell would take Eph's job, and I'd take Roswell's. Quite often Kenny Davern, who today is one of the kings of the clarinet, would sit in. I took lessons from Ed Wilcox (formerly with Jimmy Lunceford) and Herbie Nichols,

both of whom played piano at these jobs. Herbie Nichols was one of the sweetest people I've ever met, always encouraging me and so willing to share what he knew. Such incredible music came from that gentle man. He was a true original, falling in that little slot between Monk and Ellington. I felt so terrible when he died in 1963 because he knew so much yet so few people recognized the great music that was in him."

Because of his flexibility and total dedication to music, it did not take long for Watrous to become established in New York. "At the time, if you could play there was always work. I worked for 18 years in New York and did every conceivable job one could do, some of which were quite ridiculous. I once played at a Polish wedding that lasted three days. The ambulance came by twice! We got paid well for it but we didn't dare close our eyes. We got a little sleep on cots in the back."

Most of Watrous' New York gigs were a bit more conventional. "I enjoyed playing with Kai Winding's four-trombone septet. Kai wrote some great arrangements for that band and there were some J.J. Johnson charts left over from their earlier group. That was fun." In addition to playing with Winding on and off for four years, Watrous worked extensively in the studios, was on the staff of CBS, and was a member of the Merv Griffin Show's orchestra (1966-8). He spent a period of time investigating the rock scene at that time, playing with Ten Wheel Drive, and Eclipse, a unit whose strange social commentary eventually overshadowed the music. After that experience Watrous returned to television, joining the Dick Cavett Show orchestra. "That was a great band. We'd have these hot rehearsals run by Bobby Rosengarden and the band would really be shouting. The only thing was that we never got to play on the show. Dick Cavett knew nothing about music and completely ignored us. Those were great rehearsals though."

The trombonist attributes a greater consistency in his playing to his decision to become a teetotaler. "I gave up drinking completely in 1969. You know it takes less courage to go on stage plastered than to be completely sober and hear what the music really sounds like. The old image of the junkie jazz musician dies hard but there are less and less of them around as time passes and the bar tabs are getting smaller. Music is not a game, it's a serious business despite being a lot of fun. The music today is much too sophisticated to perform stoned."

**W**atrous, who appeared in a countless number of recording sessions during the '60s (usually as a session player), really came to the attention of the jazz world when he formed his big band,

the Manhattan Wildlife Refuge in 1973. "John Hammond set up the Columbia record deal which lasted for three years and two albums. He and Columbia were originally quite excited about that band but they never knew quite how to package us. We played fusion, funk, and bop. It was difficult to classify. After our second record we went on a tour but had to turn back by the time we reached Iowa. I lost my shirt on that trip. At one point in an interview with a well-known writer, I made a comment that was supposed to be 'off the record' about how we weren't getting enough money and support from Columbia and our booking agency. The writer printed the whole thing and that was the beginning of the end for us. Right after *The Tiger Of San Pedro* got a Grammy nomination, Columbia dropped us."

Watrous still likes hearing his orchestra's two records—citing *Spain* and *Dichotomy* from their debut *Manhattan Wildlife Refuge* and *Dirty Dan* and *Passion At Three O'Clock* from *The Tiger Of San Pedro*—but the selection that received the most airplay at the time evokes a negative response: "I've been haunted by *Fourth Floor Walkup* for years. It has the biggest, most exhibitionist cadenza by me, flurries of notes, high and low and all over the place. John Hammond's idea was for me to do more melodic material rather than trying to be the Maynard Ferguson of the trombone, although I didn't agree at the time. I almost totally disregarded the smoky ballads that I'd been doing for years.

"If I had it to do over again I would have called Patrick Williams, who was already living in California, and have him write our arrangements. We always had trouble with arrangers overwriting our charts so I had to edit them quite a bit. Often they would write charts without our players in mind. For example, one arrangement had very difficult parts for five flutes but our saxophonists weren't good flute players and I had to cut a great deal out."

In 1976 Watrous had tired of New York. "I decided that New York was an ugly town that had run dry for me. I had met Mary Ann, my wife, in L.A. at Donte's and that was a good excuse to make my move. Arriving in Los Angeles, I thought that with the **down beat** poll winnings and a couple of albums under my belt, I could move right into the studios. Totally wrong! I found out that the attitude was, 'Don't tell us how well you did in New York. Do it here *when you can!*' Not everyone was too thrilled with me moving to L.A. I had to sit quietly and wait my turn. Even today a lot of players are ahead of me because of seniority. There are more great trombone players in Los Angeles than in any town I know."

Eventually Watrous was accepted in the L.A. studios because of his obvious abilities and has been part of many a session in movies and television, although he sees a decreasing number of job opportunities for horn players. "At least there are still calls for making motion picture soundtracks with

brass instruments. In New York, for jingles, synthesizers have taken over. Why pay a full orchestra when you can get one keyboardist to do the job?"

Of more interest from the jazz standpoint has been Watrous' series of small group records for Famous Door. "Harry Lim always liked my playing and it was a pleasure making those albums for him. He let me play what I wanted and was enthusiastic. The six records I led for Famous Door are good examples of my bebop playing and I'm proud of them."

Watrous' frontline partner on some of these dates, and a major soloist in the Manhattan Wildlife Refuge, was trumpeter Danny Stiles. "Danny, who I met while playing with Merv Griffin, has the ability to play the lead like a classical player, with the 'legitimate' tone and flawless technique. He can also swing like mad and I always enjoyed working with him. He got disillusioned with the New York scene and now lives in Florida. I haven't talked to him in awhile and don't know if he is making a living down there playing music."

One of Bill Watrous' greatest regrets is the breakup of his West Coast big band Refuge West. "I started that band right after I left New York in '76. Some of the music was absolutely top drawer and we had a lot of top players but, other than a video, there are no records, which is an absolute crime. No company was interested in us. Now I have virtually given up the thought of leading a big band, although I still have this little devil over my right shoulder reminding me that I have a great library sitting in my garage."

With the two Soundwings releases and plans to play the European festivals this year, Bill Watrous is once again assuming a higher profile in the jazz world. And his music reflects some change as well. "All of these years I've been torn between playing a lot of notes and doing some sensible improvising. Today I'm leaning towards the latter. On some of the older records, I don't like everything I did. I do like the last two albums. I would like to play trombone like Al Cohn played the saxophone. You can't find a better more melodic and subtle improviser than him.

"One of the hardest things to do is to just simply play the melody. Today there are a whole lot of young players on the trombone with impressive technique but who sound alike, just as so many of the tenor players sound exactly like Coltrane. Among the younger trombonists, Dan Barrett is one of my current favorites. He's very tasty and has more than a nodding acquaintance with Dickie Wells and Vic Dickenson. He knows the history and it shows in his playing." Another young player of interest to Watrous is his four-year old son Jason, who recently took up the instrument. In his father's words, this third-generation trombone-playing Watrous is "incredibly loud!"

In discussing future goals, Watrous was asked if there are any musicians he would like to record with but thus far hasn't had the chance. "Jean-Pierre Rampal," Watrous replied. "I'd also like to play with Dizzy Gillespie. I love Miles Davis, it doesn't matter what he does or plays. And Freddie Hubbard I consider to be the top brassman on this planet. I recorded *Ride Like The Wind* with him but I'd like to play with him again. I'd vote for him for president!" db



ADAM WARD SELIGMAN

### BILL WATROUS' EQUIPMENT

Watrous plays a Bach Stradivarius 16MBW trombone and uses an 11C Bach mouthpiece. When he infrequently doubles on bass trombone, he prefers the Bach 50BG model with a 1½G mouthpiece.

### BILL WATROUS SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

#### as a leader

REFLECTIONS—Soundwings 2104  
SOMEPLACE ELSE—Soundwings 2100  
ROARIN' BACK INTO NEW YORK, NEW YORK—Famous Door 144  
LA ZORRA—Famous Door 137  
CORONARY TROMBOSSA—Famous Door 136  
I'LL PLAY FOR YOU—Famous Door 134  
WATROUS IN HOLLYWOOD—Famous Door 127  
BONE STRAIGHT AHEAD—Famous Door 101  
THE TIGER OF SAN PEDRO—Columbia 33701  
MANHATTAN WILDLIFE REFUGE—Columbia 33090

#### with Freddie Hubbard

RIDE LIKE THE WIND—Elektra 60029

#### with Danny Stiles

IN TANDEM INTO THE '80s—Famous Door 126  
ONE MORE TIME—Famous Door 112  
IN TANDEM—Famous Door 103

#### with Patrick Williams

DREAMS AND THEMES—Allegiance 443  
HEAVY VIBRATIONS—Verve 65075  
THINK PAT WILLIAMS—Verve 65056  
SHADES OF TODAY—Verve 65052

BY HOWARD MANDEL

**H**is drumming (like his story) comes in a rush of confidence, unpretentious authority, chuckled ebullience, and detail. You may have heard him in a number of contexts, and taken his polished abilities for granted, his absolute authenticity as unremarkable, his depth of commitment as the professionalism of a much older man. Marvin Otis “Smitty” Smith II, small but quick, witty, and strong, has in seven years worked with the best jazz and pop musicians on the planet—among them, Sting, David Holland, Jon Hendricks, Steve Coleman, Sonny Rollins, David Murray, Hank Jones, John Hicks, Slide Hampton, Benny Golson and Art Farmer. He’s 26 now, but was obviously a drummer even at age three.

“It was a natural inclination for me. My father being a musician himself, a drummer, semi-professional, he had a lot of jazz albums around the house, and that, in conjunction with what was popular on the radio at the time and whatever else I was exposed to, I just absorbed. That was the thing with me, I absorbed whatever I heard.

“When I was nine years old there were jam sessions at various small bars in Waukegan, Illinois, where I grew up—about 30 miles



## *Drummer With A Heartbeat*

# MARVIN “SMITTY” SMITH

north of Chicago. My father played for one of them [jam sessions], and he knew all the others, and he’d take me to them. I’d sit in and get my playing experience there. At the same time I was going through the after-school concert band, so I had all this on-the-job training.

“But I formally started when I was three. That’s when my father sat me down and said, ‘We’re going to show you how to do a double stroke roll and a single stroke roll.’ My godfather had given me a pair of drumsticks and a practice pad. My father had two drum sets and he let me use one—I just sat at a snare drum and practiced. It was good, but it was very intense, because of the father-son relationship; it’s really too close. A father wants his son to succeed very well and very rapidly. He was pretty hard on me—‘No, you’re doing it wrong, do it right!’ and I’d go, ‘Waaa! I’m trying!’ You get emotionally involved.

“After a year or two, he sent me to one of his friends. A real good drummer, too, named Charlie Williams. He had massive, impeccable technique, and very good sensitivity towards playing behind soloists, or with the rhythm section; he had a strong sense of swing, and played double bass drum, too—he could drive a big band, kicking along. That really affected me. I said, that’s the sound I like. I studied with him for one year, then he left Waukegan and moved to Jersey. I’m looking for this guy. I haven’t caught up with him yet.

“So I went to another friend of my father’s, Donald Taylor, and I stuck with him for 10, 11 years. And he was very instrumental in helping me learn. With his other students, it was, ‘We’ll do this, yeah, ok, well, our time is up, our hour is spent.’ With me, he wouldn’t watch the clock. He saw that I was receptive to what he was showing me, and he was into it because I was into it. On top of our weekly lesson, if I wanted to go over to his house, I’d just

do so. He’d put on a record and say, ‘Check this out.’ He had a couple sets in his basement, and xylophones, so he’d play something and I’ll play along. It was really nice. He helped me do research on my own, find things out for myself.

“See, he never handed things out on a platter and say, ‘Here, gobble this up. You got it now.’ He’d say, ‘Look. If you want to see what more you can get out of it, or find something different to do with it, here, take the record home. Take this book home, these exercises home, work on it, come back and show it to me.’ Discovering for myself—that’s something nobody can share. It’s a big revelation, and it’s exciting because it’s you *alone* that did all the research, and it’s yours, your possession. When I teach I try to give that same impetus to my students so they can come up with their own ideas.

“I started playing professionally when I was 14, in a funk band, which is what usually happens: you get together with a bunch of guys that you know from school and your neighborhood, and you start jamming. At the same time I was playing with my union local rehearsal band. Local 284. You had to be 16 to join, and I was 14. But they said, ‘This kid is here, he’s got this time on his hands, let’s grab him, get him to play. Then they had gigs. They said, ‘We got these gigs, but you’ve got to join the union, we’ve got to get you in.’ So they hooked it up, got me a card, and I was a legal union member, gigging with them, and playing with this funk band, paying dues that way. It was jazz, rock, jazz, rock, all at the same time. And I was playing weddings, parties, different things.

“My other schooling didn’t suffer—I was a B, B-plus student. I was a normal kid—hardheaded—but I had another interest that would get me involved in more of a focused direction than somebody



BILL MAY

mad, but he'd help me patch it up.

“I started going into Chicago to see cats when I was in high school. It wasn't the places they were playing—it was the fact that here these cats were playing. *These* cats. The pros, the heavy hitters. And I wanted to be in that number. I never had a dream about playing with a certain guy. I just wanted to play on that *level*. Along with the other heavy hitters.

“I saw Elvin, Dexter, Nat Adderly, Max Roach, Art Blakey—it was great. And I'm into sound, sound as a whole. Not only did I listen to the drums, but the bassist, the pianist, the horn player. How can you isolate listening to Max Roach when Charlie Parker's blowing his butt off? How can you listen to Bird without listening to Max? You've got to hear Bud Powell, Paul Chambers, or Ray Brown—because their playing is so strong, it's got so much weight to it, it *has* to hit you and effect you.

“I'd listen to the group—that's how music *should* be listened to. What's the total sound, the orchestration? I hear how the beginning should sound when you play the melody, how the melody should be played in the beginning, the solos, the development of the solos from beginning to end, then the melody to the ending. From beginning to end, how it should be shaped. I try to approach every piece I play in that sense. Then, the authenticity of the piece itself, what kind of mood you're trying to create, what era the piece was composed in. All those things you take into consideration.

“I was exposed to Ornette's music, and Trane—*Ascension*, I checked that out, it was really deep. And Miles. *Bitches Brew*, *In A Silent Way*, those records were nice, but more so *Jack Johnson*, and definitely *Live At The Fillmore*. It was jazz-related, rock-related, it was free. . . . And then Jack DeJohnette and Airtio, the sound of drums and percussion together. I heard it as *one* sound, and that led me when I was in school. If I felt a piece needed a certain sound, I would throw in a cowbell, a woodblock. That didn't come to fruition when I was younger, but when I started doing stuff with Hamiett Bluiett, with Ron Carter's group, and really with Dave Holland's group, I could implement these ideas about percussion and drums together.

“I went to Berklee College of Music in Boston for one year. Here's what concerns me about jazz education. They formulate everything. Like, you play lick number 37 combined with licks number 152, 338, and 1012, and you have a perfect phrase for the first four bars of *All The Things You Are*. Unfortunately, that's not how the music evolved.

“There were some good teachers: Billy Thompson, Billy Pierce, Andy Jaffe. And there was a lot of playing, because I was there when Branford Marsalis was there, Donald Harrison, Jeff Watts, Jean Toussaint. Greg Osby and Wallace Roney came later. We created our own group situation—we'd have jam sessions every night, and that's how we learned. I learned the same way I had at home: listen to records, develop things on my own, practice on my own time, and play with people. But it *was* good to be away from the comfort of everything I knew, on my own, meeting new people, having new experiences, growing and learning at the same time.

“In December 1980, Alex Ulovnofsky, a pianist who still teaches at Berklee, called me and said he was gigging with Jon Hendricks in Vermont over Christmas and New Year's. He invited me along. So I went to Vermont, and met Jon. We just talked down the music, ran over a tune or two, then hit. We did eight days. And when we started, Jon turned around and said, 'Hey, this is working out!' After the engagement, he said, 'You want to go on the road?'

“That took me out. I never had road experience. I'd been in school a year-and-a-half. I called my parents every day for a week, to ask them what I should do. My mom wanted me to finish school. But she understood this is what I wanted to do, and this is what it led to, so she said, 'I wish you well.' My father said, 'I'd like to see you get a full education, but these opportunities don't knock every day.' So I took a deep breath, and broke for it. January 1981, I was in New York.

“We started gigging in New York: Palsons, the Bitter End, Greene St. Greene St. was a cabaret, they didn't allow drums, and that broke my heart—but Jon said, 'Don't worry kid, I'll fix it up'.

who might eventually and unfortunately end up being a thug, or get into drugs and alcohol.

“I listened to all the music of the late '60s—James Brown's *Cold Sweat*—that was bad. Jimmy Smith with Wes Montgomery, Max Roach with Bird, Duke Ellington, Count Basie's band, Gene Ammons' duets with Sonny Stitt, Aretha Franklin. I inherited from my father an openness towards music. I'll give something a chance, a listen, judge it on its own terms. If you like it, cool; if you don't, you don't have to deal with it. I was even teaching at 14, in summer music camps, showing fundamentals to younger drummers.

“That's so necessary, because a lot of the younger drummers I see nowadays are missing a lot of information, and doing things quite wrong. They're shallow in their knowledge of the instrument, let alone the music. I mean, there's not one exact way of doing things, but there's a range of doing things right or wrong. How can you make a roll if you hold the drumstick so far down at the end so it can't bounce, or you choke it up so high you can't get bounce that way? There *has* to be a point where you can get the most leverage out of it.

“Or my students have their tom-toms so high in the air, their snares are stuck in their stomachs 50 feet away from the toms, cymbals way sky high—and they're wondering, 'Man, why can't I keep time?' I say, 'Why don't you put the equipment close enough so everything is comfortable and you can keep better time?'

“And the drum tuning! They're trying to play jazz and it's like 'Ting-tika-tik-ta THUD THUD THUD babukdabu THUD THUD THUD THUD pffft.' Arrgh! These guys are not conscious about sound, or the physical aspects of the drum setup, or the esthetics of music—they don't listen to themselves, let alone the soloists or the bass players or the piano players! It's just amazing. It's not all their fault—maybe their teachers don't have the information. But you've got to know the real information, the fundamentals, the foundation. And you shouldn't accept something that somebody hands you—you should dissect it, break it down, find out what it's made of; you have to take it and play with it.

“I was that kind of person—I was Inspector Gadget. I liked to break into my tape recorder and see how it worked. I'd dissect my drums, end up with loose screws. Sometimes my father would get

So he had me playing brushes on a phone book, and my little percussion knickknacks—woodblocks, triangle, tambourine, maracas. I did the gig. We did a week and it was fun! From there, it just kind of grew.”

The Brothers Marsalis put Smitty up at first. But soon he was independent, working with Slide Hampton’s World of Trombones, playing with altoist Bobby Watson and bassist Curtis Lundy, doing weekends with creative organist Lonnie Smith. Smitty cut his first album—“I’d done jingles and some radio things in Chicago, but this was my first actual record date”—for Muse; it was Hendricks’ *Love*. Then *Jewel*, with Watson and Lundy and percussionist Dom Um Romao. Then Branford’s *Scenes In The City*.

“The studio’s a different thing from live. Trying to get your characteristic sound on tape—I’m still learning that process,” Smitty concedes.

“I think of myself having a warm sound. My tom-toms are kind of deep, my snare is slightly loose—just at the pivot-point between loose and tight; the sound I try to create is a wave, a pastel, a backdrop for everything else. I have to be more knowledgeable in technical terms to get that point across to engineers, I guess. But I feel I shouldn’t have to tune my drums differently. My predecessors didn’t have to go through those changes, so why should I?”

“Engineers generally capture the snare pretty cool, but that’s their emphasis. Sometimes they don’t mike the cymbals close enough to get the definition, so you don’t hear the attack and it sounds like a big wash. The tom-toms often sound like they’re in another room. And this really amazes me—engineers seem scared of a bass drum.

“You’d figure the bass drum would be heard because of the effect of rock & roll, but you rarely hear it. And if you hear it, it has this thud, it doesn’t have a tonal center. I’ve had engineers say, ‘Your bass drum sounds like a floor-tom.’ And I say, ‘Well, man, the bass drum *does* have a tonal center, it’s not just some flat thing that goes *blap!*’

“On *Keeper Of The Drums* [his debut as a leader], I tried to get the sound right on everything, and capture me in the studio on tape. I didn’t get there, so I’ll have to try again. The ECM sound—it works for certain things, but not for me. All that echo—it sounds like I’m playing in a cave. And then it’s like the bass drum does not exist. Where is it? Dave Holland, he’s supportive—he wants me comfortable with the sound I’m getting. And they’ve got a *killer* bass sound on *The Razor’s Edge*, nice and natural, picks up everything. But the bass drum, that’s the heartbeat. And you can’t miss the heartbeat—that’s like tearing your heart out of your body.

“Dave and I, we enjoy playing with each other. His concept is, ‘Wherever we want to go, we should be able to go’—and that’s where I want to go, too. It’s great to play with bassists you’re comfortable with, like Dave, Ray Drummond, Rufus Reid. And dealing with Steve Coleman is nice, because he’s got a strong idea, a musical personality, his own sound, his own approach, and some stimulating, original music. We come up with some great combinations. That’s going to be an ongoing situation, because we want to follow through on our ideas, and see where they lead.

“In each situation, I want to prove I can do it, I can play in this context, and *really* do it, not in some surface or watered-down way. Like with Sting, I’m much more of an anchor, I have to hold things down, keep my function simple. A lot of people didn’t know I played any semblance of rock or funk. So it was a challenge to do it, and do it *right*.”

Smitty loves challenges, and seeks out new ones, while remaining reluctant to let any satisfying musical situation slip away. He’s so energetic and expert, and expressive of his joy in life, that he’s very much in demand. That’s him grinning like mad behind Sonny Rollins in the film *Saxophone Colossus*; also scurrying through Manhattan’s clubs as he finds he wants to spend more time at home with his wife and yet not totally neglect the scene. He’s hard at work writing compositions for his second Concord date—the first garnered fine reviews for his melodic hard bop tunes and exuberant ensemble play. Smitty exercises—“Not nearly

enough”—to keep up with the physical demands of his drum kit, and tries new things—a double bass pedal, a vast collection of cymbals, recordings that feature the drums of Baby Dodds, Zutty Singleton, Big Sid Catlett, Papa Jo Jones.

“Life’s funny, man” he says with glee. “Periodically it happens that you isolate yourself into your own little space, and that’s the most dangerous thing you can do. I’m always trying to use all the resources I can—the radio, the public library, now the tv. All these things at your disposal, there’s no excuse to be limited. It’s really a conscious choice on your part, whether you’re going to keep moving, or drop behind. Nobody stands still. I’d rather move forward.”

A heavy hitter’s off and running.

db

### MARVIN “SMITTY” SMITH’S EQUIPMENT

“Right now I’m endorsing Pearl drums and Zildjian cymbals,” says Smitty Smith, who keeps most of his equipment in storage and has only his practice pads at the ready in a den of his wife’s cozy Queens apartment. “I’m using 8×12 and 9×13 rack-toms, a 14×14-inch floor-tom, and I have a 16×16 for when I want extra sound, depending on the situation. I have a 14×18 bass drum, and a 14×20 bass drum for a little heavier work. I like to use a 22-inch bass drum and an 18-inch floor-tom, just to get the tonal center. I have a 6½×14 snare drum, Pearl’s free floating brass shell snare; it’s good for electric music because it cuts through, but I like it for jazz, too. I have a couple of Ludwig six-inch snares—I like them, too.

“As far as cymbals, for jazz I have some old K Zildjians, 22-inch with rivets—to me, it’s the ‘Smitty’ Smith sound, the riveted cymbal. I have a 20-inch K as a second ride; I have a 15-inch crash, 16- and 17-inch crash, but 14-inch hi-hats.

“I use Remo Ambassador coated drum heads with a Pin Stripe bass head. When playing jazz, I use Regal Rock nylon tip and Zildjian 5B sticks. For rock, I play with Zildjian 2B and Regal 5B sticks.

“When I was playing with Sting, the Pearl kit I had was 12-, 13-, and 14-inch rack-toms—the 14 on my left side, left of my hi-hat, and I had 14-, 16-, and 18-inch floor-toms, and a 16×22 bass drum. Besides the 6½ free-floating brass snare, I had a 3½-inch piccolo snare for the reggae tunes—that thing sounded great. For cymbals, I had a 20-inch custom K ride, because it had a real clear sound, a clear bell, and it cut through the electronics. Then I had all kinds of crash cymbals—18, 17, 16, 15, 14, and 12; 10- and 8-inch splash cymbals, and a 19 China swish cymbal. I had all these sounds because I was hearing all these sounds—I didn’t just have it all up there for show. I used this stuff. And I had an extra set of hi-hats, 13s, on the right side.

“I use a double bass drum pedal; I’ve had it about four-and-a-half years now. It took me six months before I brought it out on a gig—I wanted to be confident, and I had to work to develop it. I used it on Dave Holland’s *The Razor’s Edge* record. You can use it on two bass drums if you want to, but it hooks itself up with an L-rod, and the beater for the left pedal is next to the beater for the right foot pedal if you’ve only got one bass drum. You can do 16th-note patterns, whatever—it creates a certain sound, and I use it for dynamic effects, like when you’re at the end of a song and you want to push the energy level to the max.”

### MARVIN “SMITTY” SMITH SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>as a leader</b>                                     | <b>with Joe Newman &amp; Joe Wilder</b>       |
| <i>KEEPER OF THE DRUMS</i> —Concord Jazz 325           | <i>HANGIN’ OUT</i> —Concord Jazz 262          |
| <b>with the Dave Holland Quintet</b>                   | <b>with Kevin Eubanks</b>                     |
| <i>THE RAZOR’S EDGE</i> —ECM 1353                      | <i>OPENING NIGHT</i> —GRP 1013                |
| <i>SEEDS OF TIME</i> —ECM 1292                         | <b>with Mulgrew Miller</b>                    |
| <b>with George Shearing &amp; Ray Brown</b>            | <i>KEYS TO THE CITY</i> —Landmark 1507        |
| <i>BREAKIN’ OUT</i> —Concord Jazz 335                  | <b>with Buddy Montgomery</b>                  |
| <b>with Art Farmer</b>                                 | <i>TIES OF LOVE</i> —Landmark 1512            |
| <i>SOMETHING TO LIVE FOR</i> —Contemporary 14029       | <b>with Steve Coleman &amp; Five Elements</b> |
| <b>with the Jazztet</b>                                | <i>ON THE EDGE OF TOMORROW</i> —JMT 860005    |
| <i>LIVE AT SWEET BASIL, VOL. 2</i> —Contemporary 14034 | <i>MOTHERLAND PULSE</i> —JMT 850001           |
| <i>BACK TO THE CITY</i> —Contemporary 14020            | <b>with Peter Leitch</b>                      |
| <b>with Branford Marsalis</b>                          | <i>RED ZONE</i> —Reservoir 103                |
| <i>ROYAL GARDEN BLUES</i> —Columbia 40363              | <b>with Sonny Rollins</b>                     |
| <i>SCENES IN THE CITY</i> —Columbia 38951              | <i>DANCING IN THE DARK</i> —Milestone 9155    |
| <b>with Frank Foster &amp; Frank Wess</b>              | <i>G-MAN</i> —Milestone 9150                  |
| <i>TWO FOR THE BLUES</i> —Pablo 2310-905               | <b>with Donald Byrd</b>                       |
| <i>FRANKLY SPEAKING</i> —Concord Jazz 276              | <i>HARLEM BLUES</i> —Landmark 1516            |
| <b>with Hamiet Bluiett</b>                             | <b>with Andy Jaffe</b>                        |
| <i>EBU</i> —Soul Note 1088                             | <i>MANHATTAN PROJECTIONS</i> —Stash 247       |
| <b>with Bobby Watson</b>                               | <b>with Gunter Hampel</b>                     |
| <i>GUMBO</i> —Amigo 851                                | <i>FRESH HEAT</i> —Birth 0039                 |
| <i>JEWEL</i> —Amigo 846                                | <b>with Jon Hendricks</b>                     |
| <b>with Donald Harrison/<br/>Terence Blanchard</b>     | <i>LOVE</i> —Muse 5258                        |
| <i>NEW YORK SECOND LINE</i> —Concord Jazz 3002         | <b>with Michelle Hendricks</b>                |
|  | <i>CARRYIN’ ON</i> —Muse 5336                 |
|  | <b>with David Murray</b>                      |
|  | <i>CHILDREN</i> —Black Saint 0089             |

# GUITARISTS

## All Around

By Robin Tolleson & Bill Milkowski

### GEORGE BENSON

“I heard a Charlie Christian record when I was very young,” says George Benson, himself an influence on jazz and popular music for over 20 years. “There was something about the sound of the instrument and his playing that was very exciting. Even at seven-years-old I knew he was something special.”

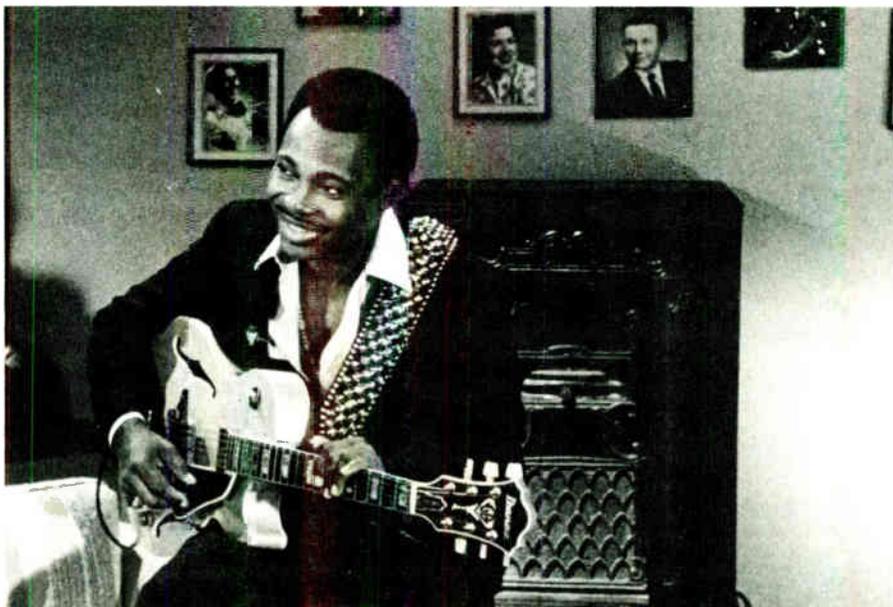
George was intrigued by Christian’s sound and his approach to the instrument. “The single-line, horn style of playing, that was unique too. We’ve been following it ever since. He was trying to make it sound like a horn, so naturally it had to be big and round. He set quite a standard.”

Benson had no formal training, and devised a way on his own to emulate Christian’s sound. “I press and let go of the frets in a manner that makes it sound like I’m separating the notes. I use that to separate the notes as opposed to using my pick hand. The force of my playing is in my right hand, but my left hand is doing a lot of the phrasing and articulating. And it’s done very lightly, without a lot of pressure.”

Benson began playing ukelele at seven when his hands were not yet big enough for guitar. He started guitar at nine, after already developing a bit of a reputation as a singer. “My folks bought me some cheap guitar, and my step-father taught me in the very beginning. I had a brief career making records when I was 10, but my career faded at 11½,” laughs the guitarist, now 45. “My guitar was gone. I guess my folks didn’t care too much either, because it seemed to bring trouble.”

George’s parents didn’t trust his managers. “People thought we had money because my name was in the paper and I was on radio and television,” he says. “Mom was always afraid somebody was going to kidnap me and ask for a ransom that we didn’t have. So when my guitar was gone I ended up practicing on other peoples’ instruments. Everytime I found somebody with a guitar, he became my friend. I learned to play on other peoples’ instruments.”

Rock and r&b were becoming very popular when Benson was in his mid-teens, and his guitar playing began to take an edge over his singing career. “You had Duane Eddy, you had *Walk Don’t Run* by the Ventures.



But in my case, the song that made guitar real popular with black people was *Honky Tonk*. If you could play *Honky Tonk* you was mean.”

Benson’s step-father made George his first electric. “I started playing with organ combos, because they couldn’t find anyone who could play *Honky Tonk* and *Hold It*. I really wasn’t good at it at all. I just had decent ears and anything that I heard within reason I could eventually pick out. That made me a hot commodity around my home town.”

A gig with Jack McDuff was George’s first big break. It got him out of town, and made him start practicing. “He came through and needed a guitar player. People were recommending me to him, but I was real young

so he had me try out for the gig. And afterward he called his manager and said, ‘Hey, I found this kid in Pittsburgh, and he’s a killer. I’m taking him on the road.’ That’s how I learned to play—the organ groups taught me. Although you had a lot of support, because the organ really covers things, it made you stick out. It really featured the guitar.”

Benson’s latest album, *Twice The Love* (Warner Bros.), as well as his *Collaboration* with Earl Klugh—which was a Grammy nominee last year—both emphasize versatility. “I’m the type of person that gets bored,” he says. “You might lose some fans here, pick up some more over there, but I just don’t think you can give people the same thing over and over again.”

—robin tolleson

### Jean-Paul Bourelly

“I knew I wanted to be a professional musician as soon as I got the guitar,” says Chicago-born Jean-Paul Bourelly. “It was just something I felt very strongly, like when you meet the love of your life or something. You find it and it’s like, ‘This is it for me.’”

But the harsh reality of being a

professional musician did not exactly match up with the idealized vision that Jean-Paul had of the biz as a teenager. “It’s a dreamland at first,” he recalls. “You know, it’s like, ‘When I make it there’ll be limousines and everybody’s gonna be nice to me. I’m gonna have a lot of money. I’ll buy my mother a house and I’ll buy my grandmother two houses and everybody’ll

have seven cars in their driveway and I'll have me a rocket ship to go to the moon. I mean, you can just go on and on fantasizing about how it's going to be. But when you get in it, that's when you start to see the reality, the politics involved in the business. And it hits you hard. It separates the men from the boys because it's definitely an adjustment. The political aspect of it can take a lot of cats out, you know?"

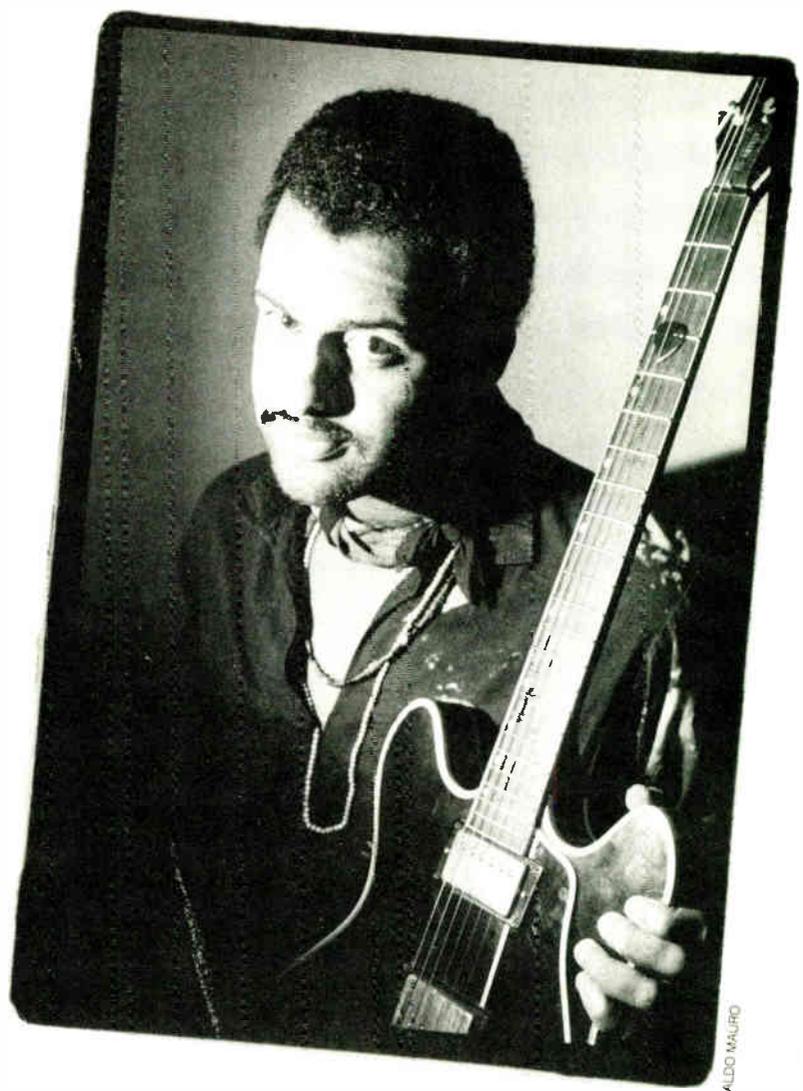
By politics, he's referring to the cold facts that the best musician does not always get the gig, the hottest band does not always get signed, and once you're signed you're not always treated fairly by the record company.

"The way it looks on the outside is definitely a world of difference," he continues. "It's not all glamour and money. But I'm a realist. I look at what the real situation is and I equip myself to deal with it. Because the bottom line is, I'll do it for the music. Whatever it takes . . . if it takes me being more diplomatic, more aggressive, whatever, I'll do it because I know in the end it's going to afford me the chance to, creatively speaking, express myself. It just teaches you patience, man.

"When I first got to New York I saw so many players and my attitude was, 'Man, I can burn this cat or that cat.' And it didn't really dawn on me until maybe five or six years later that it doesn't really matter how good you play. It matters more if this cat likes you or that cat likes you or somebody *in* with this cat is telling this guy you're great . . . *that's* what matters. And it's frustrating at first for a young musician to have to face that fact. But it stops being frustrating when you start to say, 'That's the way it is.' So you can either not accept it and stay frustrated or you can accept it and get on with your life."

After gigging around Chicago for years, Bourelly came to town and was soon taken under the wing of drummer Elvin Jones. A few years ago he did a session for the Blackhawk label with the likes of Jones, Richard Davis, McCoy Tyner, and Pharoah Sanders. He counts that as one of the more memorable gigs of his career thus far. "I was 18 years old at the time and I was so happy to be on this album with basically my heroes, cats I looked up to. Of course, I was sort of the odd man out and was kind of kept in the background during the recording. But when we went out on tour I smoked. Them cats gave me a solo and I'm talkin' about extended turn-up-the-amp wailing. And, you know, they respect you after that. It's a choice one makes. You have to take the attitude of, 'Either you like it or fire me.' Because I'm not going to sit up there and be a peon."

With the release of *Jungle Cowboy*, his stunning debut as a leader released last year on the West German JMT label, it would seem that Jean-Paul Bourelly is poised to jump to a new threshold in his career. With a major label push Stateside, he could become an important new voice



for the '90s. Watch for this cat. His fresh approach to the instrument—an amalgam of James Blood Ulmer's jangling harmolodics, Muddy Waters' stinging bluespower, and Jimi Hendrix's signature

blend of uncommon lyricism and psychedelic fire—is bound to grab you.

—bill milkowski

## GREG GINN

**S**ound comes off his guitar in savage bursts, expressing a volatile side of Ginn that you don't get in casual conversation. The 33-year-old blurs the lines between lead and rhythm guitar—he plays the spaces and makes the music move. It showed in Black Flag's thunderous, intertwining rhythm tracks in the early '80s, and is certainly present in his instrumental follow-up to BF called *Gone*. *Gone* brings to mind the Plasmatics rhythm section (a chainsaw with a fascinating frenzied beat), and the latest rhythmic world music from drummer Ginger Baker.

Ginn's success with Black Flag on the SST label is proof positive that it's never too late to try. He was 20 before he listened to music with any interest at all. "I felt that the pop music world was just people trying to make three-minute commercials, and I didn't have much use

for that," he says. "I have an unusual perspective because I didn't come from playing rock music or anything else. I was older when I got into music. I didn't have any particular cultural biases against one kind of music or another. I automatically listened to anything I thought would be good in any kind of music."

It was completely by chance that Ginn decided on guitar some 13 years ago, but until he broke a finger playing basketball late last year he hadn't put the instrument down since he started. "My little brother was taking guitar lessons, and the guitar was sitting around. I was going to college and just picked it up. It was a release, an expression for me. I didn't have any aspirations as far as playing goes. I was 19, and that's the time that pop people think about retiring and going into producing," Ginn laughs. "I started playing acoustic, just because that one was there, and I

learned along with my brother. He ended up stopping and I kept going. It became my whole life."

Black Flag was the first group Ginn ever played with. He's basically self-taught on guitar, but he didn't take a lick-oriented approach to the instrument. "I didn't have the ambition to be an all-around musician, so I just kept playing and practicing the things that I wanted to play. I'm not really a musician," Ginn says. "I just play certain kinds of music."

Ginn says Black Flag's music was largely improvised, although the group spent countless hours refining it during their heyday. It was when personnel shifted and bandmembers couldn't put the time in anymore than Ginn decided to disband Black Flag and start Gone, an instrumental quartet with his guitar as centerpiece that combines the sonic fury of Glenn Branca and the single-minded funk of a Steve Cropper jam. Static and pulsating. Hard rock and jazz improvisation.



NAOMI PETERSEN

"I try not to prejudge my music," Ginn says. "I let things happen and define it after, or let other people define it after it's there. That helps in going with the strengths of the people that you're playing with, or the machines you're playing with—taking advantage of them and adapting to the strengths. I just try to not have any preconceived notions."

—robin tolleson

## Joshua Breakstone

"Things happened in a very natural way for me. Things just developed," says 32-year-old Joshua Breakstone. "I never really set out to be a professional guitar player or

anything like it. Playing this kind of music that I do just requires so much time and so much devotion that you sort of evolve a lifestyle, really. That's what happened in my case."

Breakstone began evolving that jazz lifestyle soon after hearing Charlie Parker's music. "When I heard Bird, I knew I wanted to play like him in the sense of playing things which are meaningful, emotional, and, more than anything else, irresistibly beautiful."

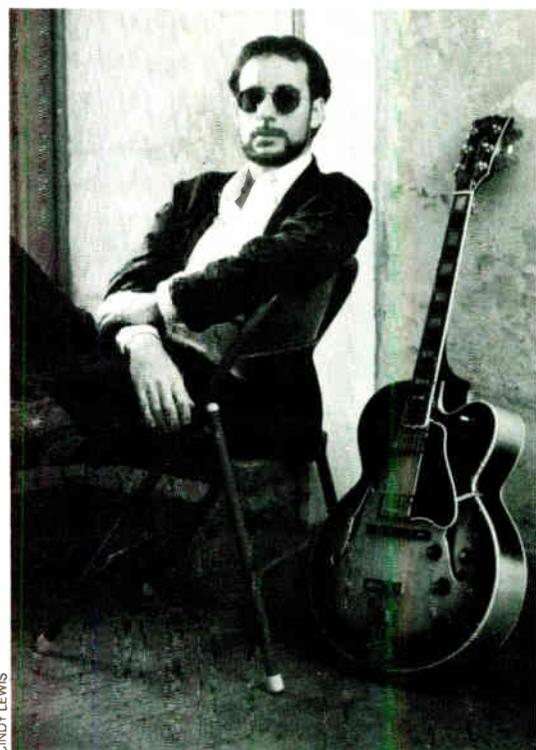
He had been mildly infatuated with rock guitarists like Jimi Hendrix, but after hearing Bird and such musicians as Lee Konitz, Art Farmer, and Bud Powell at the impressionable age of 15, he decided to go for jazz. He began studying intensively with the New York guitarist Sal Salvador, who had played with Stan Kenton. "Sal was a great teacher and the progress I made with him in a short time would have taken years and years otherwise."

He put in two terms at the Berklee College of Music in Boston, earning a degree in Jazz Studies in 1975, then in 1977 he toured Canada with reed player Glen Hall. "I just kept studying and playing and I wasn't really interested in the idea of recording or becoming a star. I was just interested in growing, in learning my instrument."

A sideman session on Hall's 1979 album, *Book Of The Heart*, on the Canadian Sonora label, finally put the recording bug in Breakstone's ear. In 1983, Sonora released his debut as a leader, *Wonderfull!*, which featured pianist Barry Harris. Breakstone followed that up the next year with *4/4 = 1* with pianist Kenny Barron. Last year, he debuted on Contemporary Records with *Echoes*, featuring Barron and the late great Pepper Adams on baritone sax. And now Contemporary is ready to release his follow-up on that label, *Evening Star*, featuring Tommy Flanagan on piano and Jimmy Knepper on trombone. He's grown with each project yet has taken it all in stride. It's all part of the process, a function of the jazz lifestyle.

"Things have just evolved. I kept recording and kept learning from people like Barry Harris and Kenny Barron. It's taken a lot of work but things have been getting better and better. And now that I'm recording for Contemporary, things are a little easier now."

Breakstone is naturally drawn to beautiful melodies and expressive playing. His albums have included tunes by such pop masters as George Gershwin, Richard Rodgers and Lorenze Hart as well as such jazz greats as Bud Powell, Thad Jones, and Benny Carter. "I listen to all kinds of stuff. I don't try to be a bebop player but I know I'm labeled that way. I don't go out and try to be hip by playing Charlie Parker tunes and Bud Powell tunes or whatever. But what really grabs me are the people who play very melodically and expressively and who know how to communicate, plus people who have a very natural kind of



CINDY LEWIS

beauty to their playing. And all those things . . . if that ends up being bebop, I dunno. It might be sambas or country music or whatever. I don't care what it's called or what the labels are. I love all kinds of music, but my focus has always been improvisation. And for an improviser, jazz is the ultimate challenge."

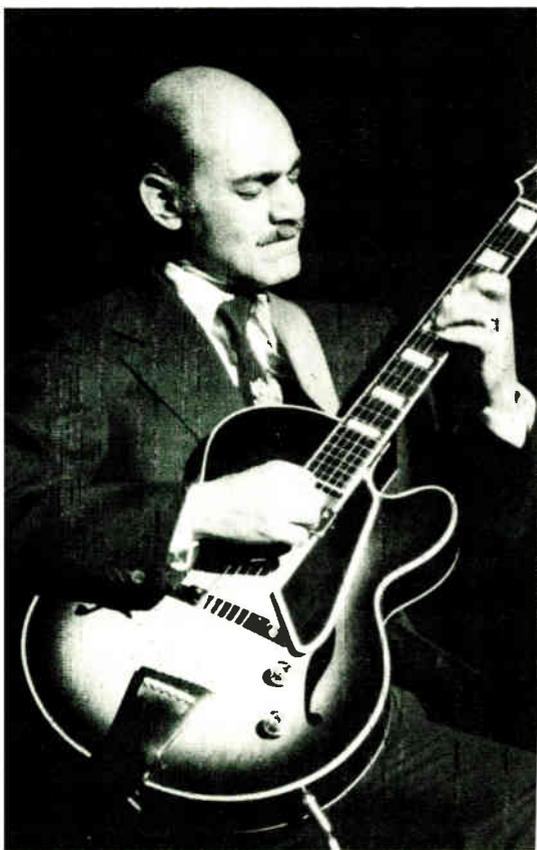
On *Evening Star*, named after the beautiful Benny Carter ballad, Joshua Breakstone continues to meet the challenge of the jazz lifestyle.

—bill milkowski

## Joe Pass

When Joe Pass was a youngster, he longed to be out from under the control of his father, Mariano, who made Joe practice guitar at least five hours a day. "My father thought I showed signs of being able to play. And his object in life was not to have his kids do the same thing he did—work in a steel mill. He wanted them all to have a better education, or some better kind of livelihood. My father would go to the music store, and if he saw any book that said 'guitar' on it, he brought it home."

The 59-year-old Pass has played with a virtual hall of fame of jazz—Ella, Duke Ellington, Oscar Peterson, among others. He can't remember getting his first guitar—he thinks one of his father's Italian friends must have left it at their house in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. But he does remember one big reason for his interest in the instrument beginning at age nine. "I went to a movie and saw a guitar player named Gene Autrey,



King Cole trio format—piano, guitar, bass. “When you learned a song, you learned a piece of music,” says Joe. “You learned a song like *Tangerine*, it had a lot of chord changes and melody. It was difficult. You weren’t playing one chord and a lot of theoretical, modal playing. I’m not putting it down, but I don’t think it does much for one’s ear training.”

Pass teaches guitar, and laughs at students who come in disgusted, saying they’re going to quit that six-night-a-week Top 40 job at the Holiday Inn because they can’t play jazz. “Listen, you’re much better off just doing that than not playing at all. Play your jazz on the gig you’re on. There’s always a way to sneak in some playing. Always. You can improvise in any kind of setting.”

—robin tolleson

## SCOTT HENDERSON

**A**s talented a guitarist as Scott Henderson is, the 33-year-old might never have had the chance to show off—in the Joe Zawinul Syndicate, Chick Corea’s Elektric Band, Players, or his own bands—if he hadn’t just asked bassist Jeff Berlin for a gig one day. Berlin, Henderson’s teacher at the Guitar Institute of Technology in Los Angeles at the time, said “Sure.” The two of them have been playing together ever since.

Henderson is from West Palm Beach, Florida. His dad was an amateur guitarist, and Scott taught himself to play on his pop’s acoustic. When he was a kid it was Rickey Nelson and the Monkees. “I’ve always loved music, but I started out playing really rank stuff,” he laughs. “I didn’t start playing anything hip until I was about 15 and started listening to bands like Deep Purple and Led Zeppelin.”

From the time he was 15 till about 25, Henderson played bars non-stop, as much as possible, including a stint in an otherwise all-black 10-piece horn band. “Nothing but James Brown, Kool And The Gang, and

Tower Of Power,” he smiles. “They were always mad at me because I couldn’t play rhythm. They would yell at me and say, ‘You’re just a solo player.’ That forced me to listen. I would buy James Brown and Earth, Wind & Fire records, try to emulate that.”

For Henderson it’s a constant battle to become well-rounded on his instrument. “I’m just starting to understand and learn some real hip, nice voicings. My single line playing is definitely ahead of my chordal playing, but I’m always working on it.”

Henderson studied composition and arranging for three years at Florida-Atlantic University in Boca-Raton, Florida, and began listening to mainstream jazz and fusion. “I’ve been lucky to have real good ears, and even when I didn’t know what I was playing, I could pick it off the record and play it,” he says. “So the bands I was in even before college were playing a lot of Weather Report and Mahavishnu Orchestra.”

Florida-Atlantic didn’t have a guitar teacher at the time, so Henderson packed off to the West Coast and GIT. “At school I finally learned what to call what I had been doing. I could improvise, and play over changes in a way, but I wasn’t a very literate musician before. Now I have more of a handle on the theory side of it.”

Henderson, who is now on the faculty of the Guitar Institute, says they teach “Learn it so you can forget it” at GIT. “It’s very difficult for some players, myself included, not to get too wound up in the technique of it all, and not to treat it like gymnastics, but to try to be musical. When you’re practicing, that’s when you analyze. When you play, try to forget all that stuff and just relax and have fun.”

The guitarist financed the recording of his first solo record, *Spears*, in 1986 with help from the parents of percussionist Brad Dutz. Passport Records then released it. “We actually did the whole record for \$4500. It’s not that expensive to do an album, and your chances are a hundred times greater of a record company buying a finished product. The people at Passport liked it, and they’ve given me total artistic freedom to do the music that I want. That’s a real hard thing to find these days.”

—robin tolleson

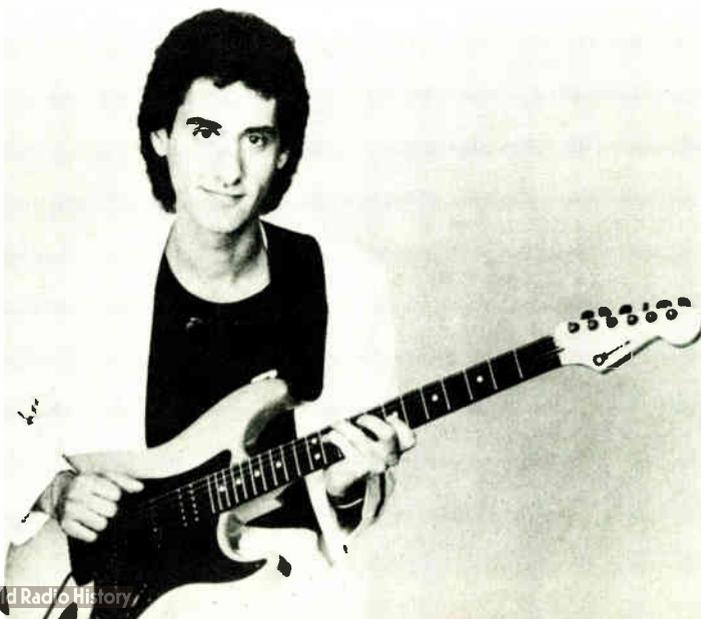
a cowboy singing and playing, and I thought that was neat.”

The guitarist can remember hearing records by Django Reinhardt and Art Tatum, Coleman Hawkins’ *Body and Soul*, Charlie Parker’s *Sho Nuff*, and *Red Cross* by Fats Navarro. “Those stand out in my memory, because when only one record comes to town, and it’s that, it’s like a treasure. And that’s all we’d get, one record. The guy who ran the music store was a jazz fan, and he’d order 15 Perry Como records, and on the side he’d order his one, but the owner would never find out. We listened to a lot of records, and a lot of pop music.”

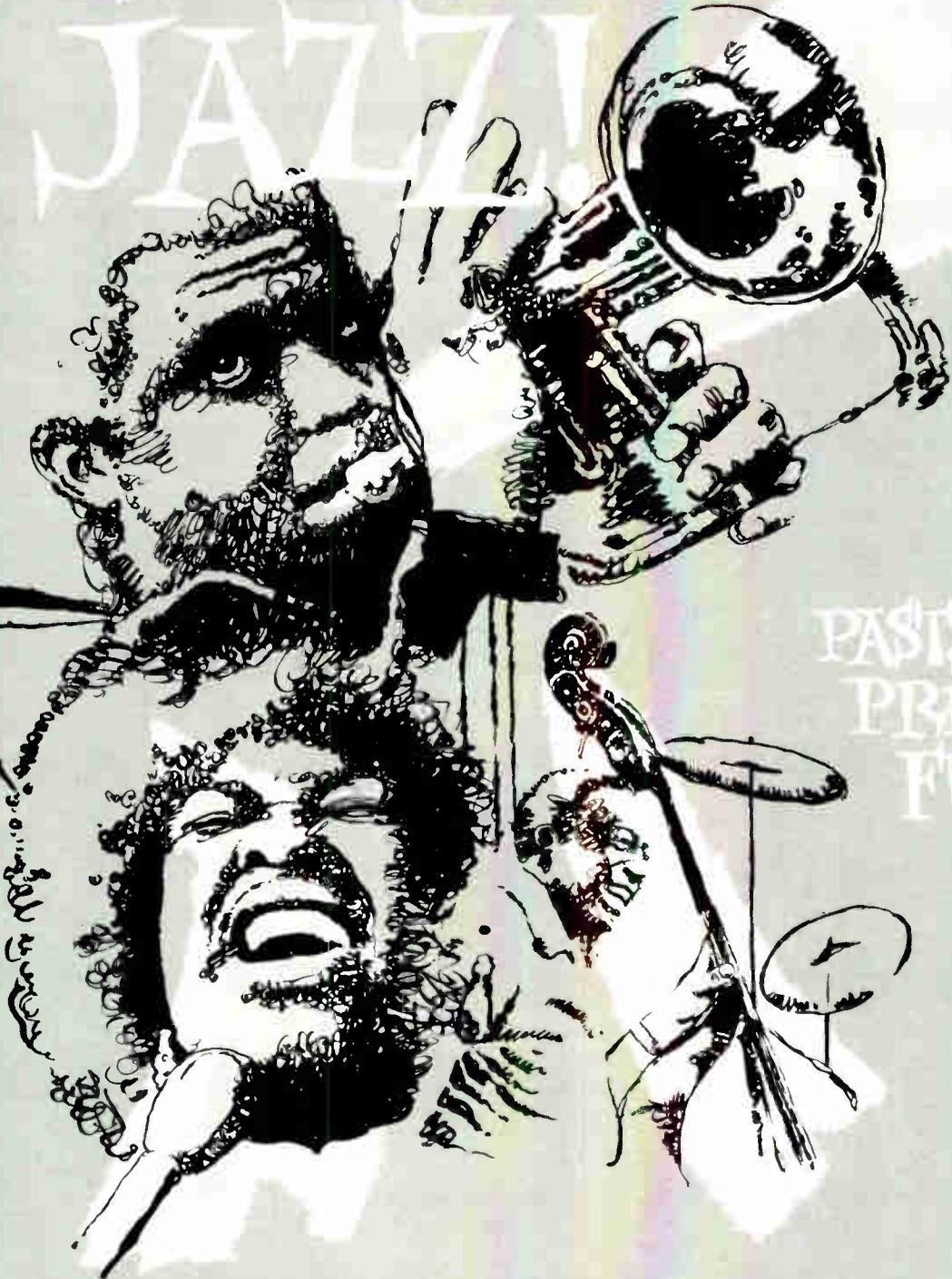
Although Pass thinks the music schools are excellent today, he did most of his schooling on stage. “I used to hang out in the clubs because there were jam sessions all the time. They were competitive, but not in the sense that you went up there trying to outblow each other. We were playing together, and really enjoying it. That seems to be lost. Some charm is gone.

“I played every time I had the chance. And if the circumstances weren’t great I played anyway. And I made the bass player play these notes or the drummer do this or that. Sometimes the guys were really good players and everything was perfect, but I didn’t have to have a jazz situation per se, or a good club or all the best players. I played with guys who didn’t know what the hell they were playing, but I played. I would do whatever I could to make it better.”

Pass became a versatile player due to his guitar-aholic attitude, and also the fact that the popular music of his day was more challenging to perform, especially in the Nat



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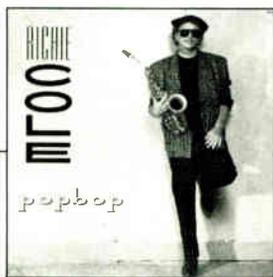
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# record reviews

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



## RICHIE COLE

**POPBOP**—Milestone 9152: *OVERJOYED*; *EDDIE JEFFERSON*; *ON A MISTY NIGHT*; *L. DORADO KADDY*; *LA BAMBA*; *WHEN YOU WISH UPON A STAR*; *SPANISH HARLEM*; *STAR TREK I*; *SONOMASCOPE*; *SAXOPHOBIA*.

**Personnel:** Cole, alto, tenor, and baritone saxophone; Vic Juris, guitar; Dick Hindman, piano; Ben Sidran, piano (cuts 1, 4); Marshall Hawkins, bass (2, 3, 6); Eddie Howard, bass (1, 4, 7, 8); Victor Jones, drums; Kenneth Nash, percussion; Tim Hauser, vocal (4); Mitch Farber, string arrangements and *Star Trek I* opening; Sal Marquez, Joe Ellis, Bob Yancey, trumpet (1); Bruce Forman, guitar (1); Mark Levine, piano (1); Jorge Pomar, bass, vocals (1); Pete Escovedo, bongos, bells, guido (1); Willie Colon, congas, vocals (1); Bayardo (Benny) Velarde, timbales, vocals (1).

★★★★★

Richie Cole's sense of humor and theatrics go a long way toward making him stand out among other saxophonists. Who else but the inventor of Alto Madness would use *Star Trek* voiceovers or list in the credits the "Violins of Madness," composed of Max Goldstein, Max Glickstein, Max Feinstein, Max Factor, etc.? The reason Cole not only gets away with these antics but actually succeeds with them is that he has first-class musical taste and technique to back up his fooling around. Richie's like the kid who brings a squirt gun to choir rehearsal but sings the solo so beautifully that the director can't bring himself to scold him.

*Popbop* is truly a product of its time: it couldn't have been made 30 years ago, or even 10. At the same time that Cole pays homage to jazz greats like Eddie Jefferson, he reinvents the style so that everything sounds like today's music, complete with synthesized orchestra on some tracks. The word integrity sounds a bit strong to apply to a tune like *L. Dorado Kaddy*, but joking aside, this music stands up to scrutiny.

Two latin-influenced tunes, *La Bamba* and *Spanish Harlem*, reflect the current rise in popularity of latin music, but otherwise, no single style dominates on *Popbop*. Tadd Dameron's *On A Misty Night* gives Cole a chance to show his bop chops, which are strong. And when Cole goes for a slicker style, as in *L. Dorado Kaddy*—with its funky bass lines courtesy of Eddie Howard and sassy licks from the MegaUniversal Saxophone Orchestra, composed of Cole, Cole, and Cole on saxophones—he still adds so many personal touches that the tune sounds like his and no one else's.

Some credit should go to Ben Sidran for

producing and Danny Kopelson for mixing this recording. Despite the continuously changing cast of sidemen (all of them good players), there's a continuity and a balance to the recording. Engineers haven't made the music sound good by holding up mirrors, though; these sidemen all work together to show each other off. Guitarist Vic Juris and pianist Dick Hindman, in particular, deserve special mention.

If any one tune could be said to sum up the feeling of this recording, it would be *Overjoyed*. Considering that Stevie Wonder composed it, it's not surprising that it does so well at bridging the categories of pop and jazz; that's something that Cole understands. And on the tender *When You Wish Upon A Star* Cole adds a tag line from *Stardust*, reminding us that he knows the standards from a few years back, too. No matter what style Richie Cole plays, it sounds modern and it sounds like him. The music sounds true to itself. That's really all you can ask for.

—elaine guregian



## JERRY HARRISON

**CASUAL GODS**—Sire 25663-1: *REV IT UP*; *SONG OF ANGELS*; *MAN WITH A GUN*; *LET IT COME DOWN*; *CHEROKEE CHIEF*; *PERFECT LIE*; *ARE YOU RUNNING?*; *A.K.A. LOVE*; *WE'RE ALWAYS TALKING*; *BOBBY*.

**Personnel:** Harrison, guitar, keyboards, vocals; Alex Weir, guitar (cuts 1-9), bass (2, 3, 5, 8, 9); Chris Spedding, guitar (1, 5); Robbie McIntosh, guitar (5, 6); Bernie Worrell, keyboard bass synthesizer (6); Dickie Landry, sax (6); Rick Jaegar, drums (1, 5-10); David Van Tieghem, drums (2), percussion (4, 5); Yogi Horton, drums (3); Arlene Holmes, vocals (1, 2, 3, 4, 9); Lovelace Redmond, vocals (2-4); Arthur Russell, Joyce Bowden, vocals (6); Monique Dayan, vocals (5).

★★★★★

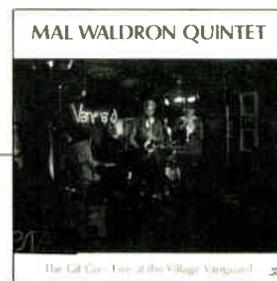
Now, you can easily be forgiven the obvious assumption that this is an album's worth of slumming by one of the Talking Heads on the eve of that group's latest new release. Forgiven, but still mistaken.

Fact is, Talking Heads is not David Byrne and Talking Heads—as any of the members will tell you. Best way to hear how they bring their preoccupations, some shared and some not, to the overall synthesis is to listen to their individual outings, whether it's Byrne's African rituals and dance settings or the Frantz/Weymouth dance floor whimsy called *Tom Tom Club*.

Harrison's *Casual Gods* are quite an impressive lineup, and the music they deliver is subtle and wide-ranging. Full of haunting asides about and glancing references to loss, violence, and death. Its intensity derives partly from the leader's reaction to the enslavement of 50,000 impoverished Brazilian gold miners who've spent the last couple of years on an old-fashioned imperialistic rush, excavating an entire mountain for the powers-that-be. As Harrison puts it, "Though they look like swarming ants or endless caravans of pack animals (and the LP cover and enclosed postcards offer both a panoramic overview of them at work on the hole that once was a mountain and wrenching closeups of their individual misery), they are men, reduced to this condition by poverty and the bewildering indifference of casual gods."

The musical heart of what Harrison does here is what he does best—build textures (not so ironically, he studied architecture along with computers years ago), and provide quirky and compelling atmospherics that either sneakily or violently upend your expectations about the tune at hand. Those tunes themselves include extended dance-funk vamps and dub-style breakdowns as well as talking drums, rap-type video-game mixing and slurring, '60s-flavored synth horn parts, and bits of cowpunk. It's exactly the kind of heterogeneous mix that can benefit from Harrison's typically offbeat touches. And if the best that can be said of his singing voice is that it's pleasantly serviceable, the lyrics and arrangements both throw you curves whenever you get too complacent. Take the harpsichord-like filigrees on the ominous *Man With A Gun*, the churchy organ on *Let It Come Down*, the scorching bottleneck that whips across *Cherokee Chief*, or the raucous guitar solo that suddenly blitzes through *Perfect Lie*. Should be fascinating to see exactly how they translate all this to the stage now that they've hit the road for March and April.

—gene santoro



## MAL WALDRON QUINTET

**THE GIT GO—LIVE AT THE VILLAGE VANGUARD**—Soul Note 1118: *STATUS SEEKING*; *THE GIT GO*.

**Personnel:** Waldron, piano; Woody Shaw, trumpet, flugelhorn; Charlie Rouse, tenor saxophone, flute; Reggie Workman, bass; Ed Blackwell, drums.

★★★★★

## MAL WALDRON

**PLAYS THE BLUES**—Enja 5021: *Blues For F.P.; Way In; Miles And Miles Of Blues; Up Down Blues; Blues For D.S.*

**Personnel:** Waldron, piano; Jimmy Woode, bass; Pierre Favre, drums.

★ ★ ★ ½

The element of incantation in jazz, the incessant repetition of elemental motifs, takes this music back to its primeval beginnings. While such musicians as John Coltrane, McCoy Tyner, and Keith Jarrett have made effective use of this form of musical mesmerism, pianist/composer Mal Waldron has most extensively and effectively tied into this potent resource.

*Mal Waldron Plays the Blues*, recorded live in Munich at the Domicile, finds the pianist in the companionable company of his longtime cohorts, bassist Jimmy Woode and drummer Pierre Favre, as he once again taps into the blues; for him a perennial and volatile inspiration. Waldron's drones are more brittle than Jarrett's, less quartal than Tyner's, and tonally simpler than Coltrane's. Yet, at its best, this is devil music of the highest order, a music whose survival depends on the intense, naked rapport of these seasoned performers to draw on these rich, dark archetypes from their collective imaginations.

Since this is one of a kind, uniformly dense music, a track-by-track description of it really isn't called for. The architecture of this cunning trio moves inexorably throughout from juncture of tension to juncture of tension. All players are equally pithy and pointed as this music creates (and discovers) its own order. This is soul-wrenching music, music of cultivated psychic and spiritual anguish. Very possibly Waldron's years with Billie Holiday and Charlie Mingus, two musicians acutely sensitive to the archetypes of despair, helped shape his sensibilities. While it may appeal only to those who have nurtured the dark sides of their moons, its validity nonetheless needs to be affirmed and then reaffirmed.

Music as compressed and intense as Waldron's risks becoming ingrown and, at times, simply tedious. Perhaps this is one of the reasons that this expatriate regularly returns to the United States to seek out colleagues who are receptive to his bent and yet have vital imaginations of their own. Whatever the case, it's hard to imagine stronger, more resourceful small group players than those assembled on *The Git Go*. Charlie Rouse—like Waldron, strongly influenced by Thelonious Monk—is typically robust, pointed and witty, and Woody Shaw is simply one of the most vibrant, crafty trumpeters on the scene. Drummer Ed Blackwell and bassist Reggie Workman form a fresh, cogent rhythmic team as they weave a sympathetic, elastic background. Waldron remains typically monochordal and percussive, yet seems happily sparked by his cohorts.

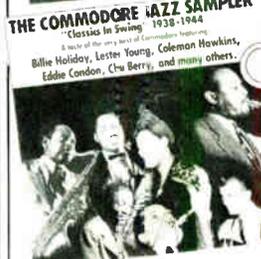
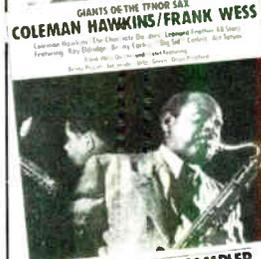
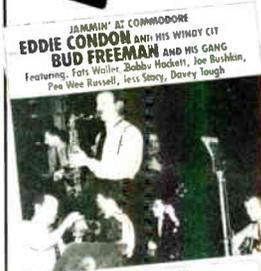
Is repetition really the soul of brevity, as Waldron's playing seems to insist? Listeners can decide for themselves. I'll only remark that Waldron and the musicians he gathers around him have tapped a source of considerable musical energy, resulting, I think, in a music of

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## LITTLE BIG BANDS

By Jim Roberts

**J**azz, it says right here in my history book, is played by small groups and big bands. Which means: if you have more than five but less than a dozen players in your band, you're working in the Twilight Zone.

That may have been true once, but some of the most creative and challenging jazz around today is being played by these in-between bands. Consider the work of the David Murray Octet or the Dirty Dozen Brass Band, just to pick two obvious examples. These are bands that can cook as hard as any quartet, or play sounds as big and lush as an orchestra. It's all a matter of using what you've got.

Tucked away around the country (and the world) are more of these little big bands. Not all of them are playing music as striking as that of the Murray Octet—but a lot of them are playing music well worth hearing, and some of it is getting on record.

Case in point: the **Microscopic Septet**, a remarkably versatile (and funny) New York City group whose work has been attracting more and more attention. Their latest release is *Off Beat Glory* (Osmosis 6006), and it's terrific. The Micros swing hard from the first note of *Brooklyn In The Fifties*, an updated jump tune that sets the mood for the whole album. The rhythm feel is straight from the '40s, but the solos—especially Dave Sewelson's berserk choruses on baritone sax—are strictly late '80s.

Joel Forrester's arrangements make intelligent use of the band's resources, and the septet often fools you into thinking that there are four or five more horn players hiding under the chairs. There are no unforgettable soloists in the band, but there isn't any deadwood either, and the ensembles are as bright and snappy as a David Letterman monologue.

Besides—you have to love a band that plays tunes like *March Of The Video Reptiles* and hires William Kotzwinkle to write zany liner notes. (It occurred to me, as I listened and re-listened to this album, that these guys should be a lot more famous than they are. Their music is well-written, their playing cooks, and everything they do is accessible. Why are they recording low-budget albums on a tiny Dutch label?)

Speaking of reptiles . . . there's a fine sextet in Portland, Oregon, known as the **Lizard Brothers**. Their leader is tenor saxophonist Rich Halley, who writes computer programs by day and blows a mean tenor sax at night. The latest album by Halley and his fellow lizards is called *Cracked Sidewalks* (Avocet P-105). While it's not as ingenious as the Microscopic Septet album, it has a half-dozen strong, well-constructed original tunes which reflect Halley's appreciation of Monk and Mingus.

The centerpiece of the album is a suite called *A View Of The World From 3rd And Burnside*. It begins with a looping, sliding bass line that kicks off a frantic bebop theme. Just as the band reaches escape velocity, Halley steps out alone with a slow, gutwrenching solo. The band drops in behind him for a few choruses of strip-joint blues, then it's Sunday morning (big, hymn-like ensemble chords) before all hell breaks loose. The mayhem leads into a final group call-and-response that beautifully orchestrates order and chaos.

The title cut of the **Paul Cram Orchestra's** *Beyond Benghazi* (Apparition A-0987-8) is also a long suite. This one features the probing alto sax of guest artist Julius Hemphill moving over and through a series of shifting textures created by the nine-piece Cram Orchestra of Ontario, Canada.

The eight pieces on the album were all composed by Cram, whose arrangements feature some unusual tone colors. His nonet includes both electric guitar and electric violin, and he likes to use the electric instruments to give a weird twist to familiar ideas. On *Round One*, for example, the scittering violin of Taras Chornowol shoves the bop theme into uncharted territory. Even more startling is *The Problem*, where Hemphill's sax encounters crunching fuzz-tone guitar.

Cram has a sharp sense of humor, too: *Eva & Adolf* is sort of a tundra tango, and *Have A Heart* sounds like a circus band on a cough medicine binge. Unfortunately, Cram sometimes falls back on stock riffs, and his music ends up sounding like tv-show soundtracks.

A similar problem plagues *8 Bold Souls* (Sessoms 0002), the eponymous debut album by a Chicago octet. The **8 Bold Souls** have a unique, bottom-heavy sound—the group includes baritone sax, trombone, tuba, cello, and string bass—but their original music is too often abrasive and melodramatic. (Imagine Archie Shepp playing the theme from *Dynasty*.) It's too bad, too, because the playing on the album indicates some fine individual talent that's not being fully realized in the group.

One of the problems is that the arrangements frequently break down into long small-group segments. After a quick statement of the theme, four or five players vanish while a soloist works out. The soloists get lots of room, but the ensemble colors aren't used very effectively to provide background color and support. Consequently, the band often sounds smaller than it really is. And, when there is some extended ensemble work (notably on *Through The Drapes*), the phrasing is ragged and the intonation unsure.

The Souls sound like an octet in search of an identity, one they should find with a little more work and some better arrangements. In the meantime, they should be encouraged (and inspired) by the good music being played by lots of other six-to-10 piece ensembles. **db**

sizeable depth and scope, one which offers unique pleasures to those who open themselves to it.  
—jon balleras



## HERBIE NICHOLS

**THE COMPLETE BLUE NOTE RECORDINGS—**  
Mosaic MR5-118: *THE THIRD WORLD* (TWO TAKES); *STEP TEMPEST*; *DANCE LINE*; *BLUE CHOPSTICKS*; *DOUBLE EXPOSURE* (TWO TAKES); *CRO-MAGNON NIGHTS* (TWO TAKES); *IT DIDN'T HAPPEN* (ALTERNATE TAKE); *AMOEBA'S DANCE*; *BRASS RINGS* (TWO TAKES); *2300 SKIDOO* (TWO TAKES); *SHUFFLE MONTGOMERY* (ALTERNATE TAKE); *IT DIDN'T HAPPEN*; *CRISP DAY*; *SHUFFLE MONTGOMERY*; *THE GIG*; *APPLEJACKIN'* (ALTERNATE TAKE); *HANGOVER TRIANGLE*; *LADY SINGS THE BLUES*; *CHIT CHATTING*; *HOUSE PARTY STARTING*; *THE GIG* (ALTERNATE TAKE); *FURTHERMORE* (TWO TAKES); *117TH STREET* (TWO TAKES); *SUNDAY STROLL*; *NICK AT T'S*; *FURTHERMORE* (ALTERNATE TAKE); *TERPSICHORE*; *'ORSE AT SAFARI*; *APPLEJACKIN'* (TWO TAKES); *WILDFLOWER*; *MINE* (TWO TAKES); *TRIO* (TWO TAKES); *THE SPINNING SONG* (TWO TAKES); *RIFF PRIMITIF* (TWO TAKES); *QUERY* (TWO TAKES).

**Personnel:** Nichols, piano; Al McKibbin (cuts 1-37), Teddy Kotick (38-48), boss; Art Blakey (1-19), Max Roach (20-48), drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

For all his influence in the '20s and '30s, pianist Jimmy Yancey never recorded until he was 45 years old, and in his lifetime created few more recordings than Herbie Nichols. Though an immensely popular entertainer, Fats Waller's most important and intimate work—his RCA piano solos—cover a bare two LP discs. Peck Kelly, Teddy Weatherford, Nichols' fellow mavericks Richard Twardzik and Hassan Ibn Ali—the list of legendary or lost, maybe even major jazz artists, goes on. Even among these, Herbie Nichols' story is unusually pathetic. By now few would disagree that he was as important as Waller or Yancey. He died of leukemia in 1964, aged 44, having seen but 145 minutes of his music issued on records. Moreover, according to the marvelous Roswell Rudd booklet that accompanies this five-LP set, over half of Nichols' wonderful compositions were destroyed by a burst water pipe (70 survived), a third of his Bethlehem recordings may be lost forever, and during a night club location recording date, Blue Note's recorders were turned off when Nichols played intermission piano.

But at last we have the major works of his career, his Blue Note studio recordings—all of them, including alternate takes and eight new titles—along with Rudd's intriguing memories and interviews and valuable musical descriptions, notes to the original Blue Note albums, and other Nichols writings. You could hardly

wish for a better way to collect a great artist's works. Unique among bop era pianists, Nichols is more than just lyrical—like James P. Johnson, Ellington, or the best of Waller. His music is active, dramatic, with a heavy fragrance of musical theater. Significantly, only a handful of his works are in slow tempos, and the vast majority of his works are based on call-response routines: Nichols internalized human intercourse and his music radiates outward. Sometimes there's darkness in his music (the intimate *It Didn't*), often there's a subtle, extended humor that's truly unique to his generation, always there's insight so clear and precise that Nichols' meanings are unmistakable.

Jack Cooke, author of the only article about Nichols during his lifetime, emphasized the pianist's composing; and indeed it's to the eight "new" songs that the eager listener turns first. Here are more Nichols portraits: the imperative, nagging *Nick*, the nervous, worried 'Orse, the arrogant pedant who argues *Furthermore*. It's appropriate that *Trio*, with its repetitions, has the alternate title *Treadmill*. *117th* is among the funkier songs of the decade that invented funk; this and *Sunday* are excellent examples of what Cooke calls Nichols' "relaxation." *Riff*, a cousin of *Cro-Magnon*, is a deep minor-key conception with an extraordinary one-beat dislocation of the final A phrase during the bridge and, in the first take, a rumbling, doom-laden solo. *Apple-*

*jackin'* is one of his greatest songs, a wonderful drunken theme with accents peculiarly anticipated or delayed, deliberate misfingerings, and in the improvisations, lurching lines that eventually spread orchestrally over several octaves.

And the alternate takes—how did they decide which excellent version of *It Didn't* to issue? The alternate *Cro-Magnon* is absolutely not to be missed. The alternate takes emphasize that two of his finest compositions, *Query* and *Spinning*, have themes and harmonic structures so self-sufficient that improvisation is almost superfluous. On the other hand, the alternate take improvisation in his finest song, *The Gig*, becomes a long, flowing line that takes energy from his left-hand punctuation; quite a difference from the original take's cubist reshaping and resetting of theme material. Both takes are outstanding.

I love the rocking swing of McKibben and Blakey in, for instance, *Amoeba's*. The lightness of Nichols' touch emphasizes the troubled moods of his *Double* improvisation as he very naturally plays with and fills in the spaces of the very spare theme. There's unusually close development in the alternate *It Didn't* improvisation; right-hand stride phrases flit in and out of *Dance Line* and *Third*. And hear the great asymmetric left hand in the first take of *Third*, his most Monk-like playing. These first two sessions introduced the fundamentals of Ni-

chols' art, most remarkably the songs full of false (*Third*, *Cro-Magnon*, *2300*) or even contradictory (*Shuffle*) directions of mood. This kind of compositional subtlety was out of place in the bop era (compare the straight-ahead songs his peers composed). Not only did Nichols' themes provide material for him to improvise upon, they pointed ahead in the direction of free jazz.

Blakey accompanied Nichols in two sessions; Roach, though, in three of the finest recording dates of his life, created *interplay* with Nichols, resulting in great trio music—the drummer's stimulus is ever-present. Here are the hard-blowing, up-tempo piano solos like the long-lined *Hangover*, the hectic *Chit*, and *Nick*, with his trumpeting calls at the ends of strains. Here are the tough/tender portrait of *Lady* and the lilted one of tap dancer Teddy Hale, *Terpsichore*; the harmonically eccentric *Wildflower*, a performance that, again, points toward free jazz. Here, too, are the great themes—including *House Party*, *Applejackin'*, *Query*, *Spinning*, *The Gig* (with its brilliant final strain that fuses the wayward preceding strains into a unity)—that break through the barriers of conventional AABA song forms to tell their stories, in lengths from 34½ to 67 and 72 bars. There's nothing self-conscious about Nichols' innovations; he seems never to have thought of himself as the bold pioneer he was. Nevertheless, his acts of communication, vivid

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and attractive as they are, had the secondary result of presenting ideas that Ornette Coleman and his more sophisticated successors would develop in the next decade.

As to Nichols' soloing, he was among the few modern pianists to achieve a balance of variation, embellishment/decoration, and improvisation in his lines. Again, his great relaxation: space is a fluid element in his music, allowing a rare mastery of linear shape so that all kinds of variety and contrast maintain his solos' vitality. Finally, Rudd's booklet reproduces—in Nichols' own script—the melody of the never-recorded song *Bartok*, one of his nuttiest pieces. May we hope that someday the rest of Nichols' unpublished works may also appear?

—*john litweiler*



## CARL FONTANA

**THE GREAT FONTANA**—Uptown 27 28: *SHOUTIN' ON A RIFF; IT MIGHT AS WELL BE SPRING; SOON; SHOWCASE; POLKA DOTS AND MOONBEAMS; EXPUBIDENT.*

**Personnel:** Fontana, trombone; Al Cohn, tenor saxophone; Richard Wyands, piano; Ray Drummond, bass; Akira Tana, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

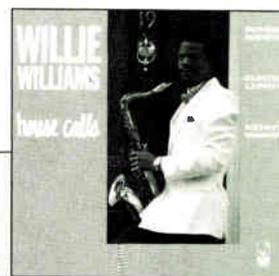
Although nowhere nearly as widely known as he should be, Carl Fontana is indisputably one of the finest mainstream trombonists on the scene today. His professional career started in 1951, when he joined Woody Herman's exciting Third Herd. Seven years of torturous one-nighters with Herman and later, Hal McIntyre, Stan Kenton, Al Belletto, and Kai Winding's Four Trombones followed, after which, once again with Belletto in Las Vegas in 1958, Fontana decided to stay in that haven for top-flight sectionmen. For the next 15 years, the now 30-year-old veteran of the road enjoyed the lucrative security of high-paying location jobs with such immensely popular performers as Sammy Davis, Jr., Tony Bennett, Wayne Newton, and Paul Anka.

His was indeed an enviable position to be in, especially since the '60s and early '70s offered so little in the way of monetary rewards for the pure jazzman whose reading skills were not as polished as those possessed by Fontana. However, despite the occasional jazz job or recording session, Fontana's name was still, even by the late '70s, obscure to the majority of jazz lovers. He did appear on quite a few excellent pure jazz record dates during this period, such as those with Supersax, Jake Hanna, Bill Watrous, and Louis Bellson, as well as performing to high acclaim at Dick Gibson's annual Colorado bashes. And yet, his reputation remained, for the most part, within the province of his fellow musicians. Hopefully, though, with the release of this album, incredibly the first under his own name, Fontana's gifts will be readily appreciated by the larger jazz public.

A bebopper to the core, Fontana not only has the technique to flawlessly execute, even at the fastest tempos, the most intricate and flowing ideas that enter his fertile imagination, but he also has a perfect ear for intonation and a lovely, warm tone; one that is here attractively

complemented by Cohn's equally personal, but more robust, blues-tinged sound. As befits such master jazzmen, the tempos are challenging, to say the least, with even the ballads *It Might As Well Be Spring* and *Soon* being given faster than usual treatments. Indeed, only Fontana's feature *Polka Dots And Moonbeams*, and Eddie Higgins' silvery, bluesish *Expubident* give the listener a chance to reflect on what he has just been exposed to. But since the record only lasts a bit under 35 minutes, listening time will easily accommodate an instant replay.

—*jack sohmer*



## WILLIE WILLIAMS

**HOUSE CALLS**—New Note 1005: *HOUSE CALLS; PHILLY SYNDROME; OSAI LIGHT; NOMAD; CITY SLICKER; SNOW WHITE; FIGURE TEN; THERE WILL NEVER BE ANOTHER YOU.*

**Personnel:** Willie Williams, tenor saxophone; Ronnie Mathews, piano (cuts 1-3, 5-7); Curtis Lundy, bass; Kenny Washington, drums; Rafik Rahim, piano (8); Billy Johnson, bass; Mark Johnson, drums; Cornell Rochester, drums (4); Bob Conga, Orlando Puntilla Rios, Miguel Fuentes, Michael Carillo, Olufemi Mitchell, various percussion.

★ ★ ★ ★

## PHILING THE BILL

By John McDonough

Last summer at the Umbria Jazz Festival in Italy, an intensely earnest man of about 55 introduced himself to me. Paolo Piangiarelli he was, and I could see immediately in his eyes that here was a man with a mission. More than that even—a cause. He was carrying a satchel full of record albums, and as we talked he proudly pulled one out—a superbly appointed box set of three LPs along with a 24-page booklet on big 12 x 12-inch pages. This was no record company promo man making with the hype. The album was his baby; the artist on it, his idol. And he meant to tell the world.

The world should be grateful for Mr. Piangiarelli's perseverance. He is a Phil Woods man to the core. So much so that not only is the showcase album of his new label a Phil Woods concert; the name of the label itself is—what else—Philology (**Phil Woods Quartet: The Macerata Concert**, Philology 314-W). In addition to notes by Ira

Gitler, assorted comments by Woods, and many uncaptioned photos, the booklet contains a complete Woods LP discography (Because distribution of this most ambitious project may be spotty, address inquiries to Carlo Pieroni, Box 99, 62029 Tolentino [MC], Italy.)

The music comes from a single evening concert performance recorded in 1980 in Macerata, Italy. Despite a slight tape hiss in the pianissimo passages, the music has an astonishing concert hall presence—open and natural, but without swimming in an excess of live reverberation. You hear the instruments in proper perspective to one another. Ten selections (mostly standards such as *Donna Lee*, *Bloomdido*, and *The Way You Look Tonight*) cover about two hours and 10 minutes. And while bass and drum solo work may occasionally doddle on a bit too long, the rhythm section as a unit functions with snap and sensitivity. And Woods himself is in superb form. His big singing tone reminds us that a sound can swing as powerfully as a line of notes. Harry Carney, Coleman Hawkins, Benny Carter and, yes, even Woods' former nemesis, Benny Goodman, all had a knack for filling

even a single note with a sense of forward motion. So does Woods. And here he is, the pure bebop player sticking to basic business. (A bonus track with strings and reeds, *Don't Despair*, a pretty ringer, is not from the concert.)

Philology is not exclusively Woods' domain. Mr. Piangiarelli has also issued two single LPs, the most interesting being **Charlie Parker's Bird's Eyes Vol. 1**. This is the first LP issue, to my knowledge, of a homemade Parker disc from 1937 in which the 16-year-old Bird plays a bravado a capella improvisation on *Honeysuckle Rose* and a bit of *Body And Soul*. Fascinating for historical interest. A dozen other mostly muddy Parker cuts are from 1948 and '52, all previously unreleased.

*Duet Improvisations For Yarbird* features Italian alto saxophonist **Massimo Urbani** and American pianist—and former Phil Woods sideman—**Mike Melillo**. Parker is less a point of departure for Urbani than an object of destination. He's a fine player. If authenticity is his purpose, though, he has not managed to avoid entirely the post-Parker '60s. Here is bop flecked with the knowledge of what came later.

db

## MULGREW MILLER

**WINGSPAN**—Landmark L-1515: *WINGSPAN*; *ONE'S OWN ROOM*; *THE ELEVENTH HOUR*; *I REMEMBER YOU*; *SOUL-LEO*; *YOU'RE THAT DREAM*; *SONHOS DO BRASIL*.

**Personnel:** *Mulgrew Miller*, piano; *Kenny Garrett*, alto saxophone, flute (cut 2); *Steve Nelson*, vibraphone; *Charnett Moffett*, bass; *Tony Reedus*, drums; *Rudy Bird*, percussion (2,5,7).

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

On his third album as a leader pianist Mulgrew Miller, in a quintet rather than a trio setting, demonstrates an extra-harmonic dimension for his writing and more breadth in his soloing style. His continued artistic growth is the result of having shed much of his earlier Tyner influences in keyboard sound and phrasing; the voice he achieves more and more is an individual one. It is steeped in the conventions of hard-bop piano to be sure, but it occasionally takes on the airy chromaticism associated with Paul Bley as we hear on the spare ballad line of *You're That Dream*, and on *One's Own Room*, a tune built around Charnett Moffett's ostinato bass line with an Eastern-flavored main theme and samba-like bridge. Intricate melody also identifies *The Eleventh Hour*, another Miller original whose solos permit lots of room without the piano's backup. Here in particular the young vibist Steve Nelson displays his talent for chromatics and outer reaches of harmony, a *la* early Bobby Hutcherson or better still, Earl Griffith.

While some of these performances lean toward the adventurous others are in the bop tradition and are not mundane. One critical attitude regarding young musicians like Miller and the tenor saxophonist Willie Williams is that they are revisionists, a term carrying slightly disparaging overtones. More power to this mainstream, to the musicians' perpetuation of the acoustic sound, phrasing behind the beat, and ability to swing. Master improvisors like Dexter Gordon have quoted from the standard and jazz tunebooks and Miller's cohorts Kenny Garrett and Nelson sustain that practice. The altoist draws on Bud Powell's *Parisian Thorofare* in his *Wingspan* solo while Nelson uses *I Remember You* to turn the main theme of *Stormy Weather*. Related to this, Garrett emerges as an interesting soloist in the way he can get the best out of clichés and sometimes rather corny licks. He liberally sprinkles stock melodic figures throughout his *I Remember You* solo and, not content with letting them fall where they may, he employs them as jumping off points into meaty expression. There are probably very few improvisors of his generation who can pull this off without sounding pretentious.

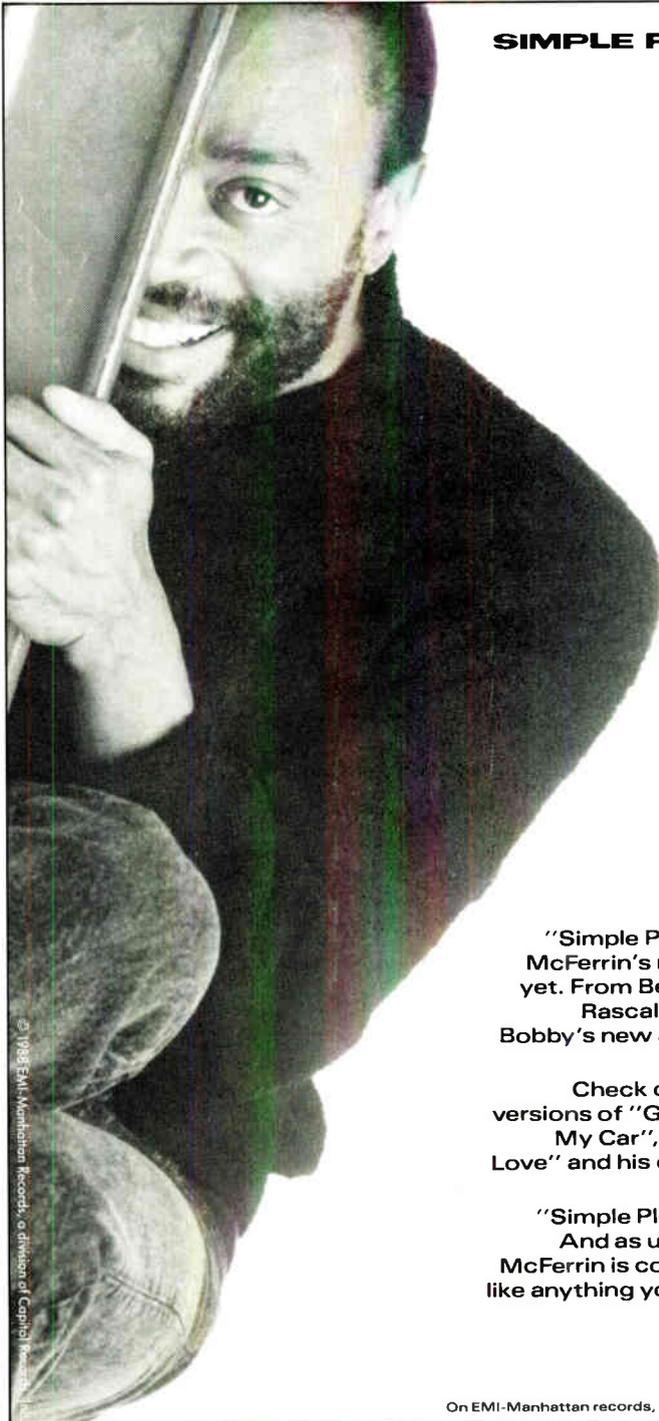
Willie Williams' *House Calls* consists of music from three different sessions during 1984 and 1985, and for one of these he and the Johnson Brothers bass and drum team salute their Manhattan street musician days with *There Will Never Be Another You*. Like Mulgrew Miller, Williams affirms the living tradition of his art and at 29 is young enough to rekindle hope in listeners. Likewise, he's experienced enough as not to make this debut as an album leader overly auspicious.

The album has curious qualities, all probably

in the long run a credit to an inner wisdom that characterizes Williams' sense of packaging as it does the logic of his solos, his hard-driving swing, and occasional phrase-ending descents into his bottom register. Several performances are four minutes long or less. He has opted to edit and economize the solos of his own creations; and, as though faced with the four-minute acetate, he's in the company and lineage of studio recordings by Bird and Don Byas. For today's expectations, the effect is uncanny. *Snow White* is a brief ode to a NYC winter, and *Future Ten*, a deftly constructed

melody, is a 91-second wonder with three fleet and agile choruses. *House Calls* and *Philly Syndrome* are evidence that Williams revels in the frenetic line based on choppy phrases, while *City Slicker* is boldly mysterious. Only *Nomad*, a feature for tenor and percussion group, is not as inspiring as the rest.

The support provided by Ronnie Mathews, Kenny Washington, and Curtis Lundy is as expert and sympathetic as one could ask for. Individually and as a unit they guide Williams' work with a keen ear on dynamics and are sharp and quick-witted enough to keep pace



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## record reviews

with his furious tempos. They contribute polish to a tenor player's album that has a few rough edges but allows us to bear witness to that player's enormous promise. —ron welburn



### RAN BLAKE

**SHORT LIFE OF BARBARA MONK**—Soul Note 1127: *I'VE GOT YOU UNDER MY SKIN*; *UNA MATICA DE RUDA (TAKE 1)*; *ARTISTRY IN RHYTHM*; *UNA MATICA DE RUDA (TAKE 2)*; *IN BETWEEN*; *SHORT LIFE OF BARBARA MONK*; *IMPRESSARIO OF DEATH*; *23 DEGREES NORTH—82 DEGREES WEST*; *DARK*; *VRA-DIAZI*; *POURQUOI, LAURENT?*  
**Personnel:** Blake, piano; Ricky Ford, tenor saxophone; Ed Felson, bass; Jon Hazilla, drums.

★ ★ ★

**PAINTED RHYTHMS: THE COMPLEAT RAN BLAKE VOLUME 1**—GM 3007CD: *AZURE*; *SKRONTCH*; *DROP ME OFF IN HARLEM*; *WHAT'S YOUR STORY*; *MORNING GLORY*; *EZZTHETIC*; *INTERLUDE*; *PAINTED RHYTHM*; *WHC*; *SMOKE GETS IN YOUR EYES*; *IMPRESSARIO OF DEATH*; *MOONLIGHT ON THE GANGES*; *HALLELUJAH*, *I LOVE HER SO*; *MAPLE LEAF RAG (3 TAKES)*.  
**Personnel:** Blake, piano.

★ ★ ★ ★

Ran Blake is a very formal artist, one who passes out program notes at club dates. Approaching his Third Stream music only in formalistic terms, however, has its pitfalls. The associative content of his music—film noir, foreign lands, and death—is the skeleton key to his art. A Blake album is not merely a collection of performances, but a matrix of essences and implications; *Painted Rhythms* and *Short Life Of Barbara Monk* are no exceptions.

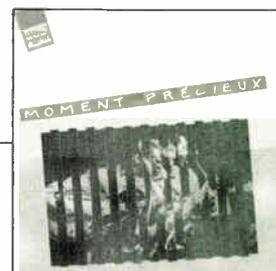
Blake's deft touch and honed harmonic sensibility enable him to shift the narrative voice within a composition and plumb new depths of meaning. This is pivotal to the position that Blake's music is best realized in piano solos. *Painted Rhythms* contains several case-in-point performances. He gives *Drop Me Off In Harlem* a boozily veering ride, a sharp contrast to his usually bright, swinging interpretation. The three takes of *Maple Leaf Rag* incorporate crunching chromatic cascades, jagged arpeggios, and splayed tone clusters, giving his variations a volatility rarely associated with Joplin. *Ezzthetic*, George Russell's fleet-footed tribute to Ezzard Charles, lurches on dark molasses chords. Even *Smoke Gets In Your Eyes* has a disarming blend of straight-faced schmaltz and Monkish mischief.

It would seem almost a given that the intimacy Blake achieves in his solo programs is

unsustainable in a quartet format. *Short Life Of Barbara Monk* bears this out despite the noteworthy efforts of his colleagues, particularly Ricky Ford, who smoulders with pungent wisps of Webster and Gonsalves. Unlike *Painted Rhythms*, where Blake's subtleties attenuate the emotions of a composition, Blake's finely-crafted quartet work compresses widely varied emotions: fear, remorse, and hysteria-assumed poise, if not elegance. He still tells wrenching stories—young Barbara Monk's losing battle with cancer; the suicide of critic Laurent Goddet in *Pourquoi, Laurent?*; the gothic melodrama of *Impressario Of Death*. Yet, to rework the rap on Blake that his music is more about jazz than of jazz, these performances are more about death than of death. They are engaging compositions, sensitively rendered—the gentle 6/4 melancholy of the title piece, particularly—but, gestalts they're not.

Blake's quartet music rises to the occasion when detailing the deep-hued, minor-keyed moods frequently essayed in his solos and duets. His upteenth version of Mikis Theodorakis' pensive *Vradiazi* is improved upon by Ford's breathiness and Ed Felson's judiciously chosen notes. The quartet format also brings a new slant to that age-old secret—Blake can swing—as evidenced by *23 Degrees North*, which is given a simmering mambo reading, and *Artistry In Rhythm*, where Ford is jettisoned by the prodding comping of the leader.

—bill shoemaker



### ANTHONY BRAXTON/ DEREK BAILEY

**MOMENT PRÉCIEUX**—Victo 02: *THE VICTORIA AND ALBERTVILLE PART I*; *THE VICTORIA AND ALBERTVILLE PART II*.

**Personnel:** Braxton, alto, soprano saxophones; Bailey, guitar.

★ ★ ★ ★

### EVAN PARKER

**THE SNAKE DECIDES**—Incus 49: *THE SNAKE DECIDES*; *LEIPZIG FOLLY*; *BURIDEN'S ASS*; *HAINES' LAST TAPE*.

**Personnel:** Parker, soprano saxophone.

★ ★ ★ ★

Free improvisation—the art of improvising without theme, fixed form, or fixed harmonic/

rhythmic structure. There are trad, swing, and bop musicians who do it, as do some rock and classical musicians; in particular, Bailey's various Company weeks—ad hoc festivals involving free improvisation with various personnel—have over the years shown the range of musics that can work within the free improvisational medium. The best free improvisation, though, seems to come from genuinely radical players like these three pioneers and masters of the art.

The new Evan Parker solo album is sensational, intense, powerful; which won't surprise listeners already familiar with the saxman's fantastic idiom. The title track is a 20-minute unbroken (circular breathing) line of superfast, ever-evolving mobile patterns whirling away—what critic Larry Kart calls an "atomic calliope"—with the centrifugal force of this zooming movement spinning off secondary lines in lower or overtone tones. It sounds like he's playing two, sometimes three lines simultaneously. If the first impression of this solo is of a sort of whizzing minimalism, repeated listenings reveal the constant movement of his patterns and the variety of internal stuff in his lines (the winding-down of *Haine's* permits close observation). Implicit are links to some of Terry Riley's improvising though I'm sure the major stimulus for this music was simply Parker's own virtuosity. In general, the patterns around which the title side revolves are multi-

ples of three even notes; in the 11-minute *Leipzig* the essential patterns are multiples of four notes.

Such solos as these are an extreme evolution of Coltrane's already-extreme sheets of sound. While Parker's soloing has on this album often proposed violence to listeners like me—witness the virtuosity, sonic and harmonic extremes, and aggression of his music—surely the main motivation is plain exultation: virtuosity of concept and execution is its own delight. *Buriden's* is the most varied solo here: cruel, quick stabs of sound inspire low, soft, wounded commentary; a one-man saxophone duel (including an overtone dispute) ensues; and there's a fine central section of small, fast, harshly jagged phrases in conflict—all of it in Parker's supercharged way, with the roughest of saxophone sounds.

The Braxton-Bailey concert was recorded at the 1986 Victoriaville festival, and may be their first duets since their 1974 *Duo* (Emanem 601). The passage of years finds Bailey a more responsive artist and, especially, Braxton a more dramatic one. And since the guitarist responds best to others' dramatic ideas, this album is more of a genuine duet performance. That the two players create together is the more remarkable because of their emphatic differences: most significantly, Braxton is fundamentally a lyrical artist, Bailey anti-lyrical.

Braxton is the center of attention, for several

reasons. First, of course, he plays alto primarily in this concert, and with his post-Ayler range of expression; the quietly amplified guitar, of course, is innately a less flexible, less immediately arresting instrument. In contrast to Braxton's great freedom with harmony, rhythm, dynamics, and line, Bailey has deliberately refined all but passing references to "representational" music out of his discourse. What he presents, then, is plain interaction, sometimes inspired, and when soloing, notes that move at slow, comparatively even velocities, within a comparatively even range of abstract tones. Occasionally, then, Baileys solos are simply static. Moreover, he moves in logical, more obviously structured directions than Braxton, who sustains extended, fanciful trains of thought, often subtly, without the sometime introversion he exhibited in 1974.

How, then, do Bailey and Braxton perform together? *Part I* opens with fine, dirty alto tones, joined by guitar sprinkles that quickly become a brief waltz, leading Braxton to romantic phrases. Soon squalling alto is punctuated by regular, hard guitar slashes, then matched by a rattling current of strings. A cool, flowing guitar solo is underlined by wavy alto. A passage of truly beautiful alto is then quickly developed into atonality by Bailey; soprano trills lead to a sweet conclusion to the side. While *Part I* is the more rewarding, halfway into *Part II* is a remarkable section in which, during

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# JORGE DALTO

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a static plucking/strumming guitar passage, alto tones become a mournful melody with long arches of sobbing tones; a sort of Johnny Hodges revised by Albert Ayler.

Presently Braxton is in the midst of a most creative period, which includes a major work, *Composition 113* (Sound Aspects 003). All of his recent recordings are ipso facto important. By now, the two English artists, Bailey and Parker, seem to have been accepted by American audiences for the valuable innovators they are. So these additions to the relatively few of their recordings available on this side of the Atlantic are definitely welcome. And listeners new to the music of these two are urged to seek their earlier Incus solo albums in particular for examples of Parker and Bailey at their most rewarding.

—john litweiler



## PAUL ELLINGSON

**PAUL ELLINGSON SOLO JAZZ PIANO VOLUME ONE**—Ivy Jazz IJ1-E1-2: *UNIVERSAL FLUX; GO DOWN MOSES; LITTLE LAURA; NIGHT IN TUNISIA; CONTINUUMORPHIC; PETE KELLY'S BLUES; THE PURPLES; WITHOUT A SONG; COAL TRAIN; SO LONG MONK; KEY LARGO; THE SPACIAL MODEL; POW WOW; SETS OF THREE; RE:PERSON I KNEW; EXTREME NONFUNCTION; THE LORD'S PRAYER; ARTISTRY IN RHYTHM; AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL; DEEP SPACE; I LOVES YOU PORGY; KURT SANDHOLTZ; INFINITE VARIETY.*

**Personnel:** Ellingson, piano.

★ ★ ★

It's been 29 years since George Russell's *Lydian Chromatic Concept Of Tonal Organization* was published; perhaps the time is ripe for a new theorist to sweep the cobwebs from our conceptual outlook, to force us to re-evaluate and reorganize our musical materials, to approach jazz composition and improvisation from a new, liberating vantage point. And, at its best, Paul Ellingson's theory is liberating. In the long, detailed, provocative album jacket essay which houses this two-record release he, at times, is indeed eloquent. Ellingson writes: "Jazz is nonresolving, infinitely varied, random, suspended, free yet disciplined, an infinite series of unique vertical combinations. Jazz needs literature on the imaginative possibilities of graded polytonality. Any chord can be followed by any chord and any note can be played against any chord as long as there is an imaginative balance between consonance and dissonance."

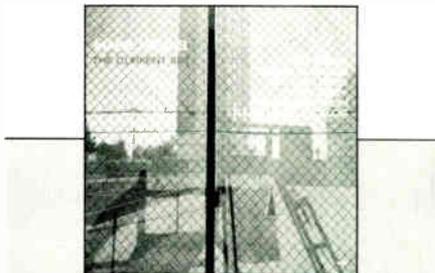
This, I think, is theorist Ellingson at his strongest. At his weakest, he is merely polemical, espousing an absolute faith in making a naive distinction between European music and American music (at times he sounds ringingly

Emersonian) all the while maintaining the clear-cut separateness of vertical (i.e. American) and horizontal (i.e. European) organizational systems. It's the mark of the polemicist that he sees things in abstract categories of absolute rather than gradations of grey, in ebbs and fluxes, in contractions and expansions.

However time will assess Ellingson's contributions, the proof of which this theoretical pudding is in the hearing. A piece like *Universal Flux* highlights his strengths. Ellingson favors rhapsodic, arrhythmic music musings. (Ellingson's theory inexplicably overlooks jazz's African tradition.) Chords—and this is the center of Ellingson's posture—are treated as isolated events, shorn of their contextual meaning. The key center doesn't meander, it's simply never clearly articulated, or at best is equivocal. It takes, I suspect, a player with a stronger melodic sense than Ellingson to bring off music like this. Other pieces, like *Little Laura* are simplistic, like an exercise, as though the player were asking us to neglect in front of Mother Goose. Ellingson is on stronger ground when he approaches standards like *Without A Song* and *I Loves You Porgy*, for vehicles like these have built in melodic strengths lacking in his own compositions.

George Russell showed us how to play through changes. Ellingson's theory, for all its flaws, may just revitalize our interest in playing on top of them, or—better yet—force us to reevaluate the very way in which we think about improvisation.

—jon balleras



## MARK HELIAS

**THE CURRENT SET**—Enja 5041: *THE CURRENT SET; NO PASSPORT; REBOUND; GREETINGS FROM L.C.; NUCLEAR ONE; ELIPSIS.*

**Personnel:** Helias, bass; Tim Berne, alto saxophone; Robin Eubanks, trombone; Greg Osby, soprano saxophone (cuts 1, 5, 6); Victor Lewis, drums; Herb Robertson, trumpet, cornet, flugelhorn; Nana Vasconcelos, percussion, voice (4).

★ ★ ★ ★

## DAVE HOLLAND QUINTET

**THE RAZOR'S EDGE**—ECM 1353: *BROTHER TY; VEDANA; THE RAZOR'S EDGE; BLUES FOR C.M.; VORTEX; 5 FOUR SIX; WIGHTS WAITS FOR WEIGHTS; FIGHT TIME.*

**Personnel:** Holland, bass; Steve Coleman, alto saxophone; Kenny Wheeler, flugelhorn, trumpet, cornet; Robin Eubanks, trombone; Marvin "Smitty" Smith, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

Tradition tends to be a big-picture proposition; discussions of jazz in the '80s quickly evoke the earliest innovators at all relevant to the immediate subject at hand, usually juxtaposed with figures from intervening decades. *The Razor's Edge* and *The Current Set* suggest, however, that tradition vitally asserts itself in relatively small increments of time. Dave Holland and Mark Helias are bassists of the same generation—Holland's emergence in the mid-'60s obscures a six-year age difference—composing for comparatively stable, pianoless ensembles; a rarity that all but prevents the imposition of big-picture traditionalist constructs, though the shadow of Charles Mingus is inescapable.

Mingus' influence on Holland has crystalized during the tenure of his sterling quintet. Especially on *The Razor's Edge*, Mingus' well-honed, exaltative blues sensibility surfaces in Holland's solos and ensemble work, giving him a visceral bite that blends well with his quicksilver virtuosity. As typified by Holland's simmering, mid-tempo *Blues For C.M.*, which features an introductory solo that balances pared complaints with the megachops, the Mingus influence has sharpened Holland's emotional content. The rap that Holland produces more notes than music is dead in the water.

The other, arguably more intriguing aspect of the Mingus connection is Holland's continued use of former Mingus drummer/vocalist Doug Hammond's compositions, which provoke some of the quintet's spiciest performances. Pivoting on bright, pungent phrases, *Brother Ty* quickly establishes Robin Eubanks as an able replacement for Julian Priester, as well as prompting Holland's most overtly Mingus-like statement of the set. *Figit Time* has the chiseled intervallic symmetry Holland favors in his own compositions, jump-starting Steve Coleman, Marvin Smith, and Holland on a mach-speed romp.

The title piece from Helias' second album reveals a distinct, if compartmentalized, Holland influence; its brisk theme has the soaring lines and slip-knotted harmonic resolutions that are the hallmarks of such Holland chestnuts as *Four Winds*. Everything on this track—from Greg Osby's serpentine soprano, to Robin Eubanks (who is a shade more forceful on this date), the resourceful Victor Lewis (and, speaking of small increments of evolving tradition, compare the veteran Lewis with Smith, who is in his twenties), and the leader's woof-rattling solo—is extremely well conceived and executed.

Helias' eclecticism, however, muddles generalizations about his compositional tendencies; the remainder of *The Current Set* ranges from sweltering samba (*Greetings From L.C.*) to painstaking pointillism (*Nuclear One*), with each idiomatic setting receiving the same level of scrutiny given to the title piece. As is Holland's case with Coleman and Kenny Wheeler, Helias benefits from a core of musicians that give his music a tangible identity—Tim Berne and Herb Robertson. Their dove-

tailed, freebop exchange on *Elipsis* paves the way for a blistering Berne solo, which, except for his own solo on *Greetings*, is the most vigorous statement of the set.

Most importantly, Holland and Helias can see the forest for the trees, and *The Razor's Edge* and *The Current Set* attest that they have a handle on the big picture of tradit' on in late-'80s jazz.

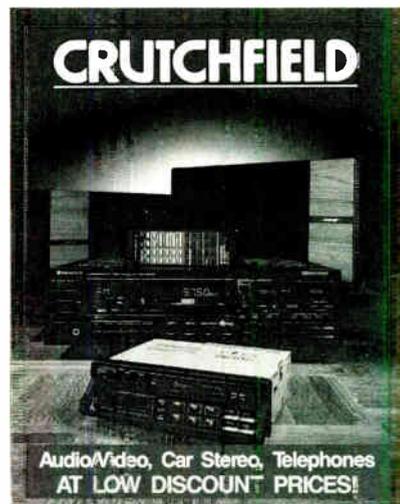
—bill shoemaker

## Waxing On

### PLEASING PLECTRUMS

- BARNEY KESSEL:** *SPONTANEOUS COMBUSTION* (Contemporary 14033) ★★★★★  
**BRUCE FORMAN:** *THERE ARE TIMES* (Concord Jazz 332) ★★★★★  
**LOUIS STEWART:** *GOOD NEWS* (Villa 001) ★★★★★  
**STEVE ABSHIRE:** *BIG BRASS BED BLUES* (Jazzbeau 1002) ★★★★★½  
**ORHAN DEMIR:** *THE WAY I SEE YOU* (Crescent 9172) ★★★★★½  
**RORY STUART:** *HURRICANE* (Sunnyside 1020) ★★★★★  
**GREG HYSLOP:** *MANHATTAN DATE* (Slope 101) ★★★★★  
**PETER LEITCH:** *RED ZONE* (Reservoir 103) ★★★★★½  
**FRED FRIED:** *FINGERDANCE* (Cutaway 001) ★★★★★½  
**GIANCARLO NICOLA:** *GOCCIE* (Leo 139) ★★  
**SONNY GREENWICH:** *BIRD OF PARADISE* (Justin Time 22) ★★½  
**DARLING/O'MARA/ELGART:** *ILLIAD* (RST Records 120 643) ★★★★★½  
**HENRY ROBINETT:** *THE HENRY ROBINETT GROUP* (Artful Balance 7207) ★★★★★

Modern jazz guitar has followed much the same approach for the last four decades or so. It came into being during the mid- to late '40s when the instrument's modern usages—electrically amplified, linear, harmonically enriched—signaled by Charlie Christian's pace-setting work of the early part of the decade, were extended further through the incorporation of the harmonic/rhythmic advances of bebop. In the main, this has been the approach adhered to by most modern jazz guitarists since, and as this batch of current releases suggests, it shows no sign of running out of



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steam. Not only is it still a strongly viable conceptual framework, but in the hands of gifted musicians can yield satisfying, even spectacular results.

**Barney Kessel** was one of the earliest players involved in its shaping. He made his first recordings as leader as early as mid-1945 when modern jazz guitar was in its infancy, and he became widely known to listeners through the remarkable series of LPs he made in late '53 for Contemporary Records. They were small-group dates with players of like abilities in which his Christian-influenced, easy-sounding mastery of blues and standards was crisply and unerringly framed. His most recent effort, *Spontaneous Combustion*, finds him back on Contemporary, supported by a trio (pianist Monty Alexander, John Clayton, bass, and Jeff Hamilton, drums) in a Kessel-arranged recital that, while ploughing no new ground for the guitarist, shows handily that he has lost none of his formidable skill in shaping improvisations that breathe with freshness, an uncluttered lucidity of conception, a springily resilient rhythm, and quiet audacity—bearing comparison with his finest work in fact. Alexander's trio seconds him perfectly, and the pianist turns in any number of absorbing, well-shaped, and generally muscular solos that contrast nicely with the guitarist's more laid-back approach. Save for the continuing vitality of Kessel's lithe playing, the program contains no real surprises, mixing four standards with an equal number of attractive blues-based Kessel originals. The album title is something of a misnomer, however—spontaneous, for sure, but combustion suggests playing of a more fiery, incendiary nature than the lower-keyed, more ordered approach that's followed and wins the day here. Kessel, it's clear, has lost none of his mastery, and we're the richer for that.

In this line of descent—although carving a niche for himself—is **Bruce Forman**, a guitarist who continues to impress with each recorded outing. He is the closest thing we currently have to a young Tal Farlow—that is, a guitarist who plays with dazzling speed, lots of harmonic savvy, plentiful invention, and, not least, a real sense of excitement. His latest Concord album, *There Are Times*, with the support of the rhythm section he's worked with so frequently—pianist George Cables, bassist Jeff Carney, and drummer Eddie Marshall—with vibraharpist Bobby Hutcherson added for about half of the program—is without doubt the finest, most perfectly realized album Forman's made thus far, and easily one of the standouts among those under review. He burns on *Strike Up The Band*, yet never sacrifices logic for mere velocity, and several of the other selections show he's got plenty of speed in reserve, which he uses only when appropriate, never as an end in itself.

The bulk of the program proceeds at more moderate tempi, however. Forman's real measure is taken by such as the languid *All The Things You Are*, Marshall's appealing *There Are Times*, Diedrich Wissel's John Lewis-like *Milan K*, the unhurried, spacious treatment accorded *The Nearness Of You* (boasting splendid Hutcherson, by the way), a delightfully latin-spiced version of Dizzy's *Con Alma*, and an absolutely stunning handling of Monk's *Little Rootie Tootie*. All make clear that Forman is a thoughtful

plectrist who approaches each tune individually and gives it his best, shaping his lines with careful attention to its potentials for meaningful elaboration. The addition of Hutcherson helps immeasurably, giving the program textural variety. He, Carney, and Marshall, individually and collectively, are well up to the high standards we've come to expect of them and contribute greatly to making this album the signal achievement it is. If you've not yet heard Forman, this is the album to check out. Contemporary jazz guitar just doesn't get any better.

If it were to do so, one of the performers to bring it about is the self-taught **Louis Stewart**, who continues to move from strength to strength with each new recording. Performing with the sympathetic backing of the fine Norwegian quartet, 4 Sure (Knut Mikalsen, guitar; Sjur Braein, piano; Sture Janson, bass; and Jens-Ivar Dagestad, drums), Stewart's recent *Good News*—one of his finest recorded efforts—clearly illustrates why he must be considered one of the instrument's world-class players. As he does time and again here, perhaps most notably on Bobby Shew's moody ballad *Blue*, the Irish plectrist constructs, with apparent effortlessness, interesting, well-conceived, long-lined solos that are true thematic-based improvisations and not just loosely-knit successions of smaller phrase units. A determinedly noncomplacent musician who always seeks to challenge himself—and his listeners—Stewart develops extraordinarily high levels of focused, deeply creative playing on all nine of the selections—Parker's sempiternal *Billie's Bounce*, Wayne Shorter's *Lester Left Town*, Luiz Bonfá's fetching *Menina Flor*, Shew's *Blue*, Cedar Walton's spruce *Firm Roots*, and the four standards *Dream Dancing*, *Just Friends*, *Some Other Time*, and *Willow Weep For Me* (this last a stunning guitar-bass duet with a wonderful Stewart reharmonization that casts this familiar piece in wholly new guise). The whole program, in fact, glows with uncloying, unclipped beauty, consummate artistry, and utter integrity; qualities that always have informed Stewart's playing, but never more so than in this warm, serenely expansive recital which the four Norwegians have selflessly given over almost wholly to him. And happily for us, he rose splendidly to the occasion. These are performances that will deepen one's pleasure, and reveal ever more of their creator's rich resources of heart, mind, and imagination. They create their own world, and that's more than enough. Make no mistake, Stewart is a major talent, and this album reveals much of its compass. Good news indeed.

Several of the other performers whose albums are reviewed here come close to achieving these high levels of creativity and sustained ideation—Steve Abshire, Orhan Demir, and Rory Stuart.

Of these, **Steve Abshire**, a fluent, assured, directly communicative player possessing a beautifully warm, rounded tone, and a fully matured conception, is closest in spirit to Kessel and Herb Ellis. That is, his music carries much of the same spare, blues-rich Texas-Oklahoma flavor that has characterized the work of these two seminal modern plectrists; not surprising when one considers that Abshire has taken Ellis as his prime inspiration, even dueting with his mentor on the album's ingra-

# DA CAPO PRESS New Titles for Spring

tiating title track *Big Brass Bed Blues*. The younger man impresses with the unhurried ideational flow and firm inner logic of his solos which, like the best jazz, use the tunes as points of departure for improvisations that really cohere and sustain interest. Conceptually, he's the most conservative of this grouping of players. Yet almost invariably, he manages to find interesting things to say and has the chops to say them clearly and succinctly; attesting, as did Kessel's album, to the continuing viability of this subtle, almost laconic approach as an outlet for the probing, thoughtful player. Abshire can burn when the occasion demands—the marvellous *You Stepped Out Of A Dream* and Parker's *Yardbird Suite* show that handily—but generally, he chooses to go about his business unhurriedly, without a lot of flash and filigree. Longtime drummer with Charlie Byrd, Chuck Redd makes an impressive debut on vibraharp; his crisp, resourceful mallet work proving an invigorating foil to the guitarist's. Bassist John Preveti and drummer John Greeley round out a fine, well-disciplined group which executes the leader's spruce arrangements to a fare-thee-well. Abshire's definitely one to watch.

Speed can be a trap for the younger player, many of whom misperceive it as the most telling means of demonstrating chops. All too often, however, velocity is all one gets in these displays. Not so with **Orhan Demir**, a young Toronto-based guitarist whose speed of execution is little short of prodigious and must be heard to be believed. He can play with such blistering rapidity and at such mind-numbing length that this aspect of his abilities may blind one to the more solid virtues his music possesses. A native of Turkey who took up guitar upon emigrating to Canada at age 14, Demir's music fuses Middle-Eastern, jazz, and rock disciplines in proportions that vary from composition to composition, producing an approach of great individuality and seizing power. While there are fugitive allusions in his playing to the work of, among others, John McLaughlin and Larry Coryell, Demir is very much his own man, bearing comparison with literally no other player, guitarist or otherwise. The first of six originals, *As Time Goes By*, derives its expressive power from the unrelenting velocity and accumulating density of his playing. It possesses a striking coherence of design and execution of which few pieces of this sort rarely, if ever, attain—sort of a guitaristic version of Coltrane's sheets of sound. Again like Coltrane, other of Demir's compositions hew to a more spiritual line—*Allah Supreme*, *In Favor*, and *Improvisation*, for examples, and are treated in a manner befitting their composer's intent. The emphatic, interactive playing of bassist Neil Swainson and especially drummer Barry Elmes contribute tellingly to the music, helping it bristle with vitality and fervor. If for no other reason than the phenomenal *As Time Goes By*, you definitely should seek this album out.

Heated and unfettered, but always sizzlingly resourceful neo-bop is served up by **Rory Stuart**, guitarist-leader of an impressive New York-based quartet (Armen Donelian, piano; Anthony Cox, bass; Keith Copeland, drums) that's been in existence for some six years now. This has enabled it to develop an incisive, finely-tuned ensemble gestalt that makes possible performances of strong, bristling creativ-

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ity, purposeful economy, and clarity of expression. The four men think as one and as a result, their music moves forward unerringly, with nothing extraneous, misplaced, or at cross purposes to their clearly defined goals. Consistency carries the day here, as well as a solid program that, with the exception of Monk's *Rhythm-A-Ning*, consists of interestingly conceived originals by Stuart (*Hurricane*, *Sweet Thing*, *Lembrancas*, *Reoccurring Dreams*) or Donelian (*The Scattered Brotherhood*). Everyone delivers, Cox and Copeland no less than principals Stuart and Donelian. And while the group tends to favor moderate and up tempi in this recital, the lengthy *Reoccurring Dreams* shows how well they can stretch out and ruminate. One or two more reflective ballads would have leavened this set nicely.

**Greg Hyslop's** *Manhattan Date* shows us an imaginative mind well on the way to true originality of expression. Then too, he has the benefit of a tight, disciplined group of players in support—Kenny Werner, piano; Scott Lee, bass; and John Riley, drums—with soprano saxophonist Bill Drewes providing added coloristic interest, most helpfully on the ingratiating *Lydia*, a wistful ballad that works largely through the sensitive interaction between the guitarist and bassist. Other of its performances—the slyly humorous *4X4 Blues* and the effective modal exploration *T-Bone's Mode*—demonstrate the uncanny rapport between Hyslop and Werner, each a vigorously and imaginatively resourceful soloist with technique to spare, who not only are perfectly matched but manage time and again to strike sparks off one another.

Taking its name from a burning original from which he never allows the fire to abate, **Peter Leitch's** *Red Zone* begins to confirm the promise implicit in the guitarist's several earlier albums. A player of considerable gifts with technique and speed to spare, Leitch is at his

best on the set's ballad fare which he animates with warmth and sensitivity. He is aided greatly by pianist Kirk Lightsey, bassist Ray Drummond, and drummer Marvin "Smitty" Smith. On faster tempi, though, the guitarist has a tendency to fall back and string together short, disconnected phrases, many of which simply fall under his fingers. This is evident on the title track, on Wayne Shorter's *Rio*, or, most noticeably, on Monk's distinctive *Off Minor* which, instead of mere change-running, demands intelligence, wit, and imagination of its players. Leitch gives it technique. Lightsey is the album's most forceful, adroit, and expressive player; his hands serve his mind, you see, and not the other way around.

Much more satisfying is the debut recording of an impressive new solo guitarist, **Fred Fried**, a student of George Van Eps who, like his teacher, plays a seven-stringed guitar and ranges adroitly through the instrument, mixing single-string lines, chorded accompaniment, and complementary bass lines. His harmonic conception is very much up to the moment, Fried acknowledging an indebtedness in this area to the late Bill Evans. The repertoire he explores so effortlessly and interestingly includes Herbie Hancock's *Dolphin Dance*, Henry Mancini's *Two For The Road*, Stephen Sondheim's *Night Music*, Burton Lane and Ralph Freed's *How About You*, and six appealing originals. The idiom is so demanding that there's not a great deal of free improvisation to Fried's playing here, which of necessity consists of carefully devised set-pieces. But he plays them beautifully and draws, with deceptive ease, great resources of deeply felt and flawlessly played music from his gently amplified instrument. Fried's off to a great start.

On *Goochie*, the trio of Swiss guitarist **Giancarlo Nicolai**, Thomas Durst, bass, and Ueli Muller, drums, pursue the difficult road of almost totally free, spontaneous collective im-

provisation—creation through performance, using its members' themes as the sketchiest guides to what emerges in the heated act of playing. The music results from the performance gestalt the group is able to achieve. That this is a most chancey way to go about creating music is clearly indicated by the results which, despite occasionally interesting passages, are in the main far too discursive and much too pretentiously "artistic" to be wholly effective. Only *Moccasnow* coheres at all well, moving forward with a controlled, directed flowing unity of thought, purpose, and execution.

The Canadian guitarist **Sonny Greenwich** follows a similar approach on his recent *Bird Of Paradise* with, unfortunately, similar results. The guitarist's themes seem much too slight to support the extended workouts—and overly histrionic approach—to which he and his quartet (Fred Henke, piano; Ron Seguin, bass; Andre White, drums) subject them. They never lead to the players' developing them in any significant, meaningful way. This is as true of pianist Henke as it is of Greenwich. Since Greenwich has the lion's share of the solo space, and he never takes it anywhere, the set fails to develop much in the way of interest. The only exception to this is Cole Porter's *Night And Day* where Greenwich shows he can negotiate a set of chord changes with aplomb and a measure of sustained invention, but even here much of what he plays simply falls under his fingers. A wasted opportunity, all around.

Still, as is indicated by the six selections contained in *Illiad* by the guitar-bass-drums trio of **Wayne Darling**, Peter O'Mara, and Bill Elgart, the approach can yield strong, interesting, persuasive results. All too few groups possess the ability to create—freely, spontaneously—music of real power and coherence on a regular, let alone frequent basis. But many can channel the lessons learned or ideas spawned in live performance into music that, through reflection, planning, and writing, retains a high degree of the spontaneity and vitality of powerfully interactive music; lessons that these three have learned.

It's a lesson that **Henry Robinett** has learned well. And the charming, wholly engaging music he and his quartet (Joe Gilman, keyboards; Erik Kleven, bass; and Rick Lotter, percussion) have given us in their self-titled album works simply because of the judicious balance that is maintained between the pre-planned (the compositions) and the unplanned (their execution); no less than the great pains that have been taken in the execution, recording, and production to ensure a seamless flow throughout the performances. What is played carries forward and sustains the intent of the composed line, making it come alive and breathe with flowing beauty, continuity of thought, great vitality, and perfect finish. Like that of Henry Johnson, among other younger players, Robinett's music draws on contemporary black popular and dance musics for many of its textures and allusions, but its lineaments derive wholly from jazz and the more arduous disciplines involved in it. Very satisfyingly too, as these sonic sculptures and vibrant pastels so well illustrate.

—pete welding

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# cd reviews

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



## DINAH WASHINGTON

**THE COMPLETE DINAH WASHINGTON ON MERCURY, VOL. 1 (1946-49)**—Mercury/PolyGram 832 444-2: *EMBRACEABLE YOU*; *I CAN'T GET STARTED*; *WHEN A WOMAN LOVES A MAN*; *JOY JUICE*; *A SLICK CHICK* (TWO TAKES); *MEAN AND EVIL BLUES*; *WALKING AND TALKING*; *I ONLY KNOW*; *THE RICHEST GUY IN THE GRAVEYARD* (TWO TAKES); 55 OTHERS, 36 UNISSUED.

**Accompaniment:** Gus Chappell Orchestra; Gerald Wilson Orchestra; Tab Smith Orchestra; Chubby Jackson Orchestra; Dave Young Orchestra; Rudy Martin Trio; Cootie Williams Orchestra; Mitch Miller Orchestra; partial personnel listings included; album notes, Leonard Feather.

**THE COMPLETE DINAH WASHINGTON ON MERCURY, VOL. 2 (1950-52)**—Mercury/PolyGram 832 448-2: *JOURNEY'S END*; *IT ISN'T FAIR*; *BIG DEAL* (TWO TAKES); *HARBOR LIGHTS*; *I APOLOGIZE*; *COOL COLD HEART*; *I'M A FOOL TO WANT YOU*; *TELL ME WHY*; *PILLOW BLUES*; 43 OTHERS, 20 UNISSUED.

**Accompaniment:** Teddy Stewart Orchestra; Jimmy Carroll with strings; Walter Buchanan Orchestra; Nook Shrier Orchestra; Ike Carpenter Orchestra; The Ravans; Jimmy Cobb Orchestra; soloists: Ben Webster, Wardell Gray, Paul Quinichette, Wynton Kelly; album notes, Dan Morgenstern.

★ ★ ★

Dinah Washington recorded something like 550 sides for Mercury, beginning in 1946 and ending when she moved to Roulette in 1962. And now the man who compiled the Complete Keynote Collection in 1986, Kiyoshi Koyama of Japanese PolyGram, proposes to make Washington his next project. Her Mercury discography, alternate takes included, will cover seven volumes of individual three-CD sets and these are the first two volumes. This is a lot of Dinah Washington. Too much.

When critic George Frazier first listened to her in the '40s, he heard Bessie Smith. Leonard Feather, who wrote *Evil Gal* for her in 1943, heard gospel in her voice. Barry Unilov heard a jazz singer in the tradition of Billie Holiday. They were all right. The entire black vocal tradition was in her. But Art Talmadge, the presiding a&r guru at Mercury in the '50s, heard a pop singer. And he was the boss. All the Dinah Washingtons come through in these six CDs, but the main one—especially by volume two—is the jack-of-all-trades pop singer. She could record everything from *Trouble In Mind* to Noel Coward's *Mad About The Boy* and still cover such diverse hit parade

brac-a-brac as *Cold Cold Heart* and *Wheel Of Fortune* in between.

Taken as a whole—and this collection is the whole of it—her work lacks the firm focus of a strong central idea. Its pop sensibility seems to follow straws in the wind. It's dated in a way that only commercial pop culture can be. Any recording from another time—be it 1940 Ellington or Bird on Dial—will, of course, carry its period textures with it. But the more overtly a performance of any period plays (or panders, if you prefer) to its audience, the more it needs that particular audience to validate it. When the audience disappears, so does the illusory power of that validating consensus. Only the record remains, its original validity faded into quaintness. It's this commercialism that undermines the credibility of Washington's better jazz and blues work.

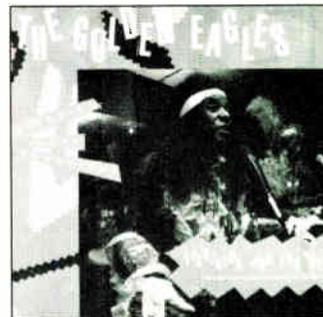
Between 1946-52, the Swing Era was mostly gone. Music had drifted on a pastiche of old big band clichés and novelty tunes that led nowhere. Even today, these years remain a period without a name. Washington was a captive of the Mercury company mindset, in much the same way Ella Fitzgerald was a captive of Decca's for so many years. But Norman Granz took control of Ella's recording career in 1956. He rescued her from the pressures of formula commercialism, and she went on to build the body of work on which the better part of her rarified reputation still rests. But Talmadge was not Granz. Dinah Washington is what Ella might have been if there had been no Granz.

In volume one, Dinah is cast as the soft r&b singer with pop potential. There are dozens of slow juke box blues (*Record Ban Blues* is an interesting commentary on the second Petrillo strike following the passage of the Taft-Hartly act) and run-of-the-mill ballads that are mostly forgotten today. The only good material she works with were tunes that were standards even then: *The Man I Love*, *What Can I Say Dear*, *Embraceable You*. But the drift is clearly in the direction of commercial cross-over.

This emerges as the clear theme of volume two from the first track, *Journey's End*, where Dinah is backed by a male vocal quartet. For every piece of interest (*Big Deal* with a swinging band and *Blow Top* featuring the fine Paul Quinichette), there are a dozen cover versions of other artists'—white ones, mostly—hits. We hear Don Cornell's *It Isn't Fair*. There is *Harbor Lights* with strings, *My Heart Cries For You*, which she belts out in sobbing waltz time, and *Tell Me Why*. There are downright ocdball items (*Baby Did You Hear*) that fit no mold at all and aren't very good.

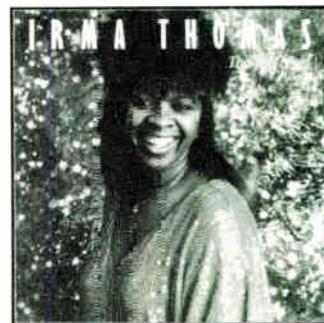
The upshot is that Dinah Washington would have been better served by a selective reissue of say five LPs, or their equivalent, and not the complete treatment that seems to lie ahead. She was not an artist of such surpassing importance that even the unimportant becomes important. She was not Bessie, Billie, or Aretha. Most artists work within more limited horizons. For them, it's better that some things remain in the past so that we can remember them for their best, not their worst. This was Dinah Washington. —john mcdonough

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**BILL CONNORS**

**ASSEMBLER**—Pathfinder PTF8707-CD: *CRUNCHY; SEA COY; GET IT TO GO; ASSEMBLER; ADD ELEVEN; TELL IT TO THE BOSS; IT BE FM.*

**Personnel:** Connors, guitar; Tom Kennedy, electric bass; Kim Plainfield, drums.

★ ★ ★

**RICHIE BEIRACH/  
JOHN ABERCROMBIE**

**EMERALD CITY**—Pathfinder PTF8701-CD: *ODIN; ANSE DES FLAMANDS; SLEIGHT OF HAND; EMERALD CITY; ON OVERGROWN PATHS; CARNIVAL SUSPENSE.*

**Personnel:** Beirach, piano; Abercrombie, guitar synthesizer.

★ ★ ★

Trying to breathe new life into fusion is something like digging up and resuscitating a dinosaur born dead. You can dress it up, but you

can't really take it anywhere. And the fact is, with the rare exceptions of truly frightening breakthroughs by a handful of its progenitors, the music never amounted to much anyway—endless solos with little dynamic or tonal shift over boring odd-meter vamps whose only purpose was show off the protagonists' zippity-doo-dah chops. Like wow, man. Dare you to whistle some of the truly memorable fusion tunes by Lee Ritenour or Jeff Berlin or Spyro Gyra. In key ways, then, fusion's not so very different from its doppelganger, heavy metal: the tension that sustains your interest (assuming you're not a convert or unconscious) comes from how sparks fly when the players bring their admittedly prodigious improvisational abilities to bear on essentially trivial material. Same basic problem and payoffs with both these CDs, although in different ways.

Abercrombie was one of the earliest fusion-guitar practitioners, and certainly remains one of the ablest and most consistently searching. Over the last couple of years he's been delving into guitar synths more heavily than anybody I know of, except for maybe Adrian Belew and Andy Summers. Not surprisingly, then, that's the focus of this disc. What he can coax out of his customized Ibanez is often quite breathtaking technically and lovely musically, and belies many of the gripes other players hang on the thing. Maybe he can adapt the tool so well to his uses just because he's worked so hard at it; but whatever the reason, he's one of the few jazzers who's picked the synth up without having his own guitaristic voice immediately swallowed by its canned sounds.

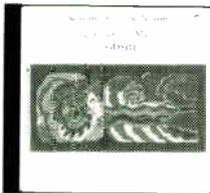
Here he arrays its spacey, never-quite-there textures and polyphonic capabilities against the harsher sheen of Richie Beirach's piano; an inspired juxtaposition that opens up the tunes to some of the offbeat atmospheric approaches he's been trying out in more conventional trio and quartet settings. The results are sinuous and striking in an understated sort of way that skirts the New Age without becoming bathetic, and can certainly repay repeated listenings—once you accept the fundamental flaws outlined above.

Bill Connors, too, was present at the creation, in Chick Corea's first edition of *Return To Forever*. In a sense, he's been traveling on a musical Moebius strip ever since: with his free-form acoustic recordings, dropping out for years of silence and classical woodshedding, redefining himself and his attack in the post-Holdsworth scheme of things to come back to his Coltrane-meets-Clapton roots. His second trio outing continues his emphasis on the basics: taut interplay and quick-witted listening by his backers that feeds him maximum power to unfurl his long and gracefully slinky lines. He can bite off a phrase or flurry you with a note-blizzard with equal ease. And unlike some of the more generic players who've copied his trailblazing approach, he still keeps deep in his sound the cry of the blues he learned from his models, the grit and raw edge that break through the unspectacularly-arranged tunes, and transforms them into a usable conduit for his own voice. So in that sense what you get is the best of what fusion ever had to offer.

—gene santoro

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## 1 JIMMY RANEY. *DINAH* (from *JIMMY RANEY VISITS PARIS, Dawn*).

Raney, guitar; Jean-Marie Ingagrand, bass; Jean-Louis Viale, drums; Maurice Vandaire, piano; Roger Guerin, trumpet; Bobby Jaspas, saxophone.

Tal Farlow? He's certainly got the chops. It's definitely someone out of the bebop era. Maybe Jimmy Raney. But if it is, it's not his best work. I mean, that was real good but it didn't sound like he was quite in the groove like I've heard him play at other times, particularly the stuff he did with Stan Getz. He has a beautiful tone here but I can almost hear the strain it takes to play an instrument with thick gauge strings. On other things I've heard him sound effortless. On this one it sounded like it was a little harder for him to play. That's the nature of those big-bodied jazz guitars. They're real hard to play. Hard action, heavy strings. But Jimmy is a beautiful player. He was one of the first to play bebop on the guitar and is still, to this day, a master player in that idiom.

## 2 PAT METHENY. *TRIGONOMETRY* (from *SONG X*, Geffen). Metheny,

guitar; Ornette Coleman, alto saxophone; Jack DeJohnette, drums; Charlie Haden, bass.

Well, that's Pat with Ornette. I love this record. I've known Pat for years and I know his music pretty well. I remember when we first played together in 1973 and he was into this kind of playing then. And I've always heard that in the Pat Metheny Group music too. His eighth-note is a beautiful flawless stream of playing and the way he just plays so loosely. And it's great to hear him with Ornette. He's always been influenced by Ornette and Paul Bley and this kind of music . . . bebop with a certain freedom to it. And on guitar, Metheny does it as good as anybody. A beautiful record.

## 3 GRANT GREEN. *OLD FOLKS* (from *GRANDSTAND*, Blue Note).

Green, guitar; Jack McDuff, organ; Al Harewood, drums.

I love it. I'm a big Grant Green fan. This is beautiful. He always had a great feeling. I remember when I first got into listening to jazz I used to think, 'Man, he doesn't sound as good as Tal Farlow or Johnny Smith. They can play tons of stuff.' But I learned to appreciate Grant later on, that it's in his feeling and the notes that he plays and the singing quality that he gets on the guitar. I can just hear it naturally flowing out of him. I mean, some players sound like they're just practicing the same thing that they play at home when they get on a gig. It has no . . . they're not making a special moment of it.

## JOHN SCOFIELD

by Bill Milkowski

**B**orn the day after Christmas in 1951, John was raised in suburban Wilton, Connecticut, where he grew up with the influences of bluesmen like B.B. King and Otis Rush, and rock & rollers like Little Richard and Chuck Berry. A local guitar teacher introduced him to the music of Wes Montgomery, Jim Hall, and Pat Martino, thereby sparking a lifelong interest in jazz. From 1970 to 1973, he attended the Berklee College of Music in Boston and landed his first important exposure gig in 1974 as a replacement for Mick Goodrick in the Gerry Mulligan/Chet Baker reunion band concert at Carnegie Hall. Soon after that debut he was recruited by Billy Cobham, whom he played with for two years. In 1977, Scofield worked with his Berklee mentor Gary Burton and kept busy on sessions with Charles Mingus, Dave Liebman, Lee Konitz, and Jay McShann, among others.

In 1979 he formed the John Scofield Trio, which became his primary musical outlet through 1982, at which point he joined the Miles Davis Group. He re-



mained with Miles through three albums (*Star People*, *Decoy*, *You're Under Arrest*) before forming his own electrified quartet. In 1986, Scofield was voted #1 guitarist in the **down beat** International Critics Poll and #3 in the **down beat** Readers Poll. His fourth album as a leader on Gramavision, *Loud Jazz*, was recently released (following the success of *Electric Outlet*, *Still Warm*, and *Blue Matter*). Scofield is also a member of the ECM recording group Bass Desires with bassist Marc Johnson, drummer Peter Erskine, and guitarist Bill Frisell. And he continues to record with saxophonist Bennie Wallace.

But Grant's playing is like it's just coming right out of his head at that moment.

## 4 KEVIN EUBANKS. *TRICK BAG* (from *FACE TO FACE*, GRP).

Eubanks, guitar; Ron Carter, bass.

That's Kevin Eubanks. You can tell because he doesn't play with a pick and he uses that thumb a lot just like Wes. Kevin is a beautiful guitarist but he seems like he's pushing it here. It sounds like a virtuoso guitar piece as opposed to a meaningful piece of music. I mean, it is possible to do both too, you know.

## 5 ALLAN HOLDSWORTH. *DEVIL TAKE THE HINDMOST* (from *METAL FATIGUE, Enigma*).

Holdsword, guitar; Jimmy Johnson, bass; Chad Wackerman, drums.

Allan Holdsworth? It's hard to tell nowadays because there's a lot of people out there imitating him, but I didn't think anybody had done it this good. I think Allan is a technical innovator on the instrument, without a doubt. It's just beautiful what he can do with the guitar. It's the natural evolution of light action, easy-to-play guitars amplified loudly

with certain effects on it. Just the opposite extreme from what Jimmy Raney was playing on. And I've been starting to hear other people playing out of this bag but there's a certain edge to what Allan plays, a certain chance-taking bravado that I like. And not just the speed stuff. There's a certain beauty to his tone just when he plays chords. There's a deepness to his sound that comes from the reverb he chooses and from the way he hits the strings. He's remarkable.

## 6 SCOTT HENDERSON. *BIG FUN* (from *SPEARS, Passport Jazz*).

Henderson, guitar; Gary Willis, bass; Steve Houghton, drums; Pat Coil, keyboards; Brad Dutz, percussion; Bob Sheppard, saxophone.

I really like this guy. I think he's really good. We both like some of the same type of things in music, some of the same intervals and stuff. There's a certain Weather Report-ish interval he uses that I like too. And he likes the blues. He's a beautiful guitarist with a lot of command of the instrument and a great sound. His lines are coming out of bop but he's also got all the whammy bar stuff happening. He's got both sides totally down. And this is some really ambitious writing. Sounds a little bit like Jaco's *Liberty City*. Really great. db

## WAYNE HORVITZ

FROM TRADITIONAL TO AVANT GARDE AND BEYOND, THIS PIANIST/COMPOSER IS OPENING NEW DOORS INTO SOUND, STYLE, AND IDIOM.

By Gene Santoro

**"E**ven in the groups I lead, I spend a lot more time comping than soloing," says 32-year-old composer/keyboardist Wayne Horvitz. One of the mainstays of that part of the East Village scene that loosely revolves around renegades like John Zorn, Horvitz has amassed credits for playing with such diverse folks as Butch Morris, Bobby Previte, Eugene Chadbourne, and William Parker, as well as leading his own rock-oriented group, the President, the bop-based Sonny Clark Memorial Quartet, and the jazzy New York Composers' Orchestra.

Not so coincidentally, his approach to playing reflects his major writing concerns: "The main thing I'm always interested in is trying to do things to the other players in the band, to change contexts on them. If you listen to a lot of Zorn's records, for instance, I'm rarely the person who's on top—and I love it that way. I love to hear some maniac like Eugene do his thing, so that I may be able to do something under it that puts it in a new perspective. That's the reason I'm in music, that's what I really, really enjoy. So I try to bring that out."

It's an approach that developed naturally enough from the kinds of music the young Horvitz grew up on, whether in D.C. or south of San Francisco. Abandoning traditional music lessons on piano and flute at nine, he heard the '60s psychedelic bands his older brothers loved, and that led him, as it did so many, into other musical formats. "I'd gotten into Otis Spann after being into Monk, because my brothers had gotten into various blues artists through the psychedelic bands." So he found a piano teacher for the blues, who handed him—what else?—*St. Louis Blues*. "It had one of those standard simple blues bass lines; it was a stupid arrangement, but I figured out that if I kept playing the left hand and played something else with my right hand I could not go back for any more lessons [*laughs*], that I could do something besides what was just on the paper." So he did what most aspiring young players of the time did: he jammed around. "In high school—this is around 1970—we used to get together and play free with a groove—I mean, everyone was into electric Miles. *Bitches Brew* and *Live At The Fillmore* were out. I had a Rhodes, and I had a



MITCHELL SEIDEL

ring modulator and a wah-wah pedal and stuff. When I look back at that now, I can see how much it had to do with my being attracted to sound—that was it."

Attending the University of California at Santa Cruz in the early '70s, Horvitz continued to study in his idiosyncratic way, and is refreshingly candid about how that shaped his abilities. "Even then I didn't take any private instruction on piano. I took music courses and tried to learn to play mostly by myself. As a result, I played really badly for a long time [*laughs*]. I took some classical lessons and some jazz classes, but at that point, and still today, I don't think of myself as a great reader. In straight-ahead jazz I read charts pretty well, I can read treble clef well and my rhythm's okay; I can read the chord symbols and all, but I don't read piano music well at all. I can *write* it faster than I can read it [*laughs*]. The styles I can play well I can read well. I don't have that kind of stylistic breadth that a lot of piano players do who've played all the literature; sometimes I regret that. But in my early college days I dug mostly into bop as a traditional music, and so I play over chords reasonably well. I also dug into my own composing and improvising."

Whatever his limitations as a player, he learned to listen really well to some key players, like Cecil Taylor and Ornette Coleman. But as with his friend Zorn, Horvitz wasn't taking musical shape in any one musical context. "The jazz courses were pretty mediocre. But there was a whole other scene there, this whole New Music classical scene. I got a lot out of that, but I was really involved with the avant garde jazz players. I was also listening to all sorts of rock, and improvised rock, and psychedelic music. That was just as much a part of what I was hearing. Also, by the time I was doing

this stuff there was more openness to the use of electronics. Cecil might have refused to use them, but even from the way people like the Art Ensemble used acoustic instruments it was clear that everyone was hearing that broader sense of sound."

His studies over, Horvitz headed to the Apple. "I came back to the East Coast when I was done. Everybody'd been talking about it; basically our heroes at that time were the Art Ensemble and Cecil Taylor and Sun Ra and Ornette, and they were all in New York. But for a long time I stayed with the people I'd worked with in Santa Cruz. Finally I met some people, like Zorn and Chadbourne, who'd already been here a year or two. I was playing string bass as well as piano, which was good, because both John and Eugene were very anti-piano at the time. I couldn't have done much with keyboard electronics at the time even if I'd wanted to, 'cause I couldn't have gotten the equipment into any of the places we were playing [*laughs*]."

"So I played with those two. I was drawn to what they were doing and I was happy to play, but there was a whole lot of improvising going on that related to Cecil Taylor and the others I've mentioned that I really wanted to get into too. I did some playing with Frank Lowe, Dennis Charles, and William Parker. Then a couple of years after I moved here, I hooked up with Butch Morris, which became a long and important relationship."

As he moved across country and across scenes, Horvitz's writing grew and ramified. "I'd been writing little tunes before I went to college, then when I was there I wrote some things for big ensembles that were really influenced by how Cecil writes and how Michael Mantler wrote; like on the Jazz Composers' Orchestra record. But I remember writing tunes for small ensembles then that even at the time had a lot of the kind of country and gospel aspects of pop that interest me, and also elements of Indonesian music. The way I like to use simple repetitive figures comes from there."

"The biggest single development in terms of my writing, at least for me, came two years ago when Robin and I put together the New York Composers' Orchestra. From my end, I put it together specifically because I hadn't written to paper for a couple of years—I'd been doing mostly multi-track tape things where I would write out the themes, but I was really working to put the rhythm tracks together on tape. You start with track one, then what do you want to put on track two? It's not a very preconceived approach. So I wanted to get back to writing for acoustic instruments, and I wanted to get back to writing, period, where you have to decide everything. Obviously I have some improvisation in my pieces, but the things I've written for the Orchestra are

not structures for improvisation *at all*; if someone solos, it's very much in the context of written things. So it's a very traditional sense of writing, and that's been a big change for me. I really enjoy it and want to keep it up."

Horvitz's approach to arranging is as varied as his compositional and group formats would lead you to expect, but it does have certain common features. "Two things here. The obvious thing that everybody always says about Ellington writing for the improviser is *so important*: if there weren't records of this music we'd all be in deep trouble [*laughs*] because it's not like Mozart. Although, who knows—I have a feeling that Mozart was writing for the same court musicians most of the time, or at least players who had the style in their blood because it was the music of the day, and so he knew how to do that too. When Murray Perahia plays Mozart, for instance, you really get a sense of the *personality* of the music, but so often with classical music you don't get that, which is what turned me off about classical music in the first place. And then there's gamelan. The thing about gamelan music that I always really loved is that

the music in front would be pretty structured, composed more or less, and then in the middle of the music—not in front, but just there—was the *su ming*, which is the wooden flute, and the *reba*, which is the violin-like instrument—and those guys were playing their asses off. But it's not like a solo; it's part of the total sound and texture of the music. That really impresses me.

"At the same time, I still go out and play completely free improvised gigs all the time, and often incredible music happens; I'm certainly not questioning the great tradition of people blowing. But in a lot of the music I've done lately I have been more interested in making the improvising have a stylistic continuity. For instance, the reason that somebody like Elliott Sharp or Bill Frisell or Dave Tronzo have all been really great for the President is that the guitar players have to play the blues for that band: I write the music so that the solos are in the blues tradition. *But* each of those guys has his own individual style. If I take someone who's a great blues player but always sounds like he's listened to Otis Rush, well, I don't want that. But I can't use someone who's gonna insist that he's gonna take any solo he wants,

either. One of the really awful sides of jazz and fusion music in the last 20 years is how ego has surpassed all things. Unfortunately, some of the greatest players have contributed to that. John Coltrane, to me, was a man with almost no ego who played some of the most beautiful music on earth, but so many people have looked to him as an excuse to go play and not listen—and that drives me crazy, and would've driven him crazy too.

"The idiom determines how I work, to some degree. With the Composers' Orchestra I come in with the parts all written out; sometimes I'm late . . . [*laughs*]. I think I know better what works best for different things. With the trio, with Butch and Bobby, I almost invariably come in with what you would think of as a head, a theme. Occasionally it's a theme with chord changes, so it's more like a traditional jazz chart; and there's one tune on our last record where we actually cycle the chords. Sometimes it's a theme with changes but we don't use the changes to improvise on. Sometimes it's a piece of piano music with a couple of parts, and we decide who's gonna play what. And Butch often is not the person who plays the

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melody: we like to break it up, obviously. And Bobby plays marimba and keyboards in that group, so we're able to do a lot of things. I always bring in the music, but we always arrange it as a group. And those are more like tunes. The trio is more about improvising—not individual solos, but improvising as an ensemble,” as their most recent release, *Nine Below Zero* (sound aspects sas 014) demonstrates.

“The way I work with the President, I just sort of write the parts at the piano, sometimes on guitar, and I bring 'em in on little scraps of paper and I show them to people. No one makes up their own parts, with a few exceptions: Previte makes up the drum parts, and sometimes the bass and guitar lines I leave open. But I teach people the parts by rote: it's a rock band, and I don't want people to think about paper, 'cause I think rock music with paper onstage is just funny [laughs]. It's an aesthetic thing, really, but style determines a lot. I mean, can you imagine the Rolling Stones getting up on stage with sheet music [laughs].”

*Voodoo* (Black Saint 0109) displays yet another Horvitz side. “I was approached by Black Saint to make a record of any kind of jazz I wanted, because I'd done a record for them with William Parker and Butch. Of the straightahead jazz I was playing, I thought that should be it. First of all, I love Sonny Clark's music, and the structures of those tunes, which are basically blues and rhythm changes, get to whatever kind of talent I have for that music. Second, I think John is a really interesting foil in jazz, more idiosyncratic than a lot of people. And third, we've been playing that stuff for almost 10 years, and until now there was no chance to record it—no one outside of New York had ever heard it.”

Horvitz has pronounced views on the values and functions of his instruments within his different ensembles. “I feel that the piano as an instrument is worthy of any kind of solo, long or short, which is something I rarely feel about synthesizers. With the President I do very little soloing, and when I do it's usually on a very traditional keyboard sound. Synths just aren't expressive enough. And all the talk about keyboards being touch- and velocity-sensitive and all—well, I hear people who take solos on them, and they just all sound lousy to me.

“The kind of stuff on the Elektra record (a compilation of previously-released tracks called *The Next Generation*) comes from spending a lot of time just programming because I get tired of my sounds. I'll spend a week doing nothing but programming, and then I won't touch it for three months. Often a sound starts a piece; when it does, I find it's very hard for me to ever use that sound again as the basis for anything else. That shows me something about the nature of



Horvitz, piano; Marty Ehrlich, alto saxophone; Scott Lee, bass; Pheeron Aklaff, drums.

those kinds of sounds.

“You asked me which keyboards I use. I don't have many keyboards: a DX7, the new version of the DX7 as well, an Akai sampler that I use more for little bits of this and that, mostly for theatrical and film things. So I'm pretty much within the realm of what the DX7 will do. Unlike a lot of people, I really like the DX7; it's really good for a piano-type envelope, sounds that have a quick attack and decay relatively quickly and are percussive, since that's the way I phrase because I'm a piano player. I rarely use string sounds or brass sounds or other kinds of synthesizer sounds on it anyway, so if people complain that they're too thin on the DX7 it doesn't bother me. But the marimba sounds, the vibraphone sounds, all those things that are mallet or hammer sounds are really good on the DX if you know how to program it. So that ends up being pretty much all I need. I have a little practice amp, but since I'm a keyboard player I can usually go direct onstage.”

His near-future plans include a new disc from the President and lots of live fare. “I'm doing four nights of music at the Kitchen in April, where I'll be doing more or less everything: the President, the Orchestra, the songs project with Robin (Holcomb, his wife), and the trio with Butch and Bobby. I'm really pleased, because it forces me to consolidate all these different things I do.”

db

## RAY BENSON

AS ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL'S LEAD GUITARIST/BANDLEADER, BENSON IS TAKING HIS BAND ALL OVER THE MUSICAL TERRAIN.

By Dave Holland



asked to name several of his band's recordings for a hypothetical “blindfold test” of a

swing band hornman, guitarist/dance band leader Ray Benson prefaced his selections by saying “We would stump them all. Culturally these folks have never heard of us, they wouldn't know who the hell it was and they might not like it. That's being a little presumptuous. They might like it.” This tall, transplanted Texan went on to name *Song Of The Wanderer*, *One O'Clock Jump*, which won the group a Grammy in 1978; *They Raided The Joint*, a Roy Eldridge novelty with Arnett Cobb on sax; and *String of Pars*, which won a Grammy this year.

Benson's band, *Asleep At The Wheel*, whose first major album in this decade mixes *Pars*, an instrumental with the syncopated feel of Glen Miller's *String Of Pearls*, with *House Of Blue Lights*, Huey Lewis' *I Want A New Drug*, and a country shuffle by Billy Joe Shaver, *Way Down Texas Way*. For 15 years AATW has been the prime, if not sole, musical example of the juncture of hillbilly and dixieland music; a juncture which took place just about 50 miles east of the “x” in Texas, and came to be known as western or Texas swing, with Bob Wills as its band-leader exemplar.

“Country-western, big band jazz: both those titles will fit us, but we're definitely a dance band. We're happiest in a dance setting. And in a dance setting it makes a lot more sense musically. We bebop around so many different styles that are really not very consistent musically except that they are connected by the fact that people dance to them. That's the way I like my music—mixed-up. I wander all over the musical landscape.”

Those two facts—that this is a dance band which wanders all over the musical terrain—may explain why AATW has had almost as many Grammy nominations as recording contracts, why it plays big band standards but was elected “Best Touring Band” in 1977 by the Academy of Country Music, and why Benson counts among his fans and golf partners both Willie Nelson and Huey Lewis.

“Nobody else is geared to it [dance music]. It's all geared to concerts, arenas, festivals, intimate clubs. Except for Holiday Inn-type bands we're the only one geared to a dance and show format. We played the ball room operators convention, and booked a dozen ballroom gigs. That's where it's at: a dance floor, seating, and a bar or bring your own. Sit down, relax, have a drink or get up and dance all night. That's what we're all about, having the option to do both. It kind of pisses me off there aren't more places like that.

“We don't make set lists or nothing. We do an opening four numbers, assess situations, and then do whatever is called for. If we stood on stage for an unlimited time, if they wanted to hear us, I don't know how

CONTINUED ON PAGE 51

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ANTONIN KRATOCHVIL

Benson (center, with guitar) and Asleep At The Wheel.

many different songs we could do. If we're not an opening act, we regularly play as long as two or three hours straight. So we're talking 30, 40, even 50 tunes right there."

What the audience gets is a brew of country-swing instrumentation (fiddle, steel guitar, as well as saxophone); big band jazz standards, and cowboy songs. The albums as well as the gigs mix hoedowns and big band swing, reels, fox trots, and blues. You might hear Tex Beneke's version of *Chattanooga Choo Choo* followed by Bob Wills' *Boot Heel Drug* followed by *Sleep Walk* or *Night Train*, and of course lots of tunes with "Texas" in the title. The band jams, its soloists alternate, Benson calls for tunes "everybody knows" but which the band hasn't played together before. AATW has always worked up songs on stage before recording.

He describes his playing as "take off" guitar. "When they say 'take off' you take off. I like a clean Fender or Les Paul sound, not just jazz guitar but a little country here and there." His solos feature swinging single note leads and horn licks.

The band's latest LP, *Asleep At The Wheel HIT HIT* (Epic 40681), marks their return to Epic Records. Benson says things are definitely easier the second time around. "We were always ahead of our time, period. So times catch up with it; that's radio I'm talking about. Time could have passed us by just as easily: so I'm not fooling myself. We've been very lucky to get another chance at this area of the business. The people at Epic understand what they got. Back in '74 we were unknown, so different, it was hard to figure out what to do with us marketing-wise."

Where in the past the lead vocals were shared, now Benson, the sole remaining original member of the group, sings all the leads. While it made for interesting albums, with songwriter Leroy Preston (in Nashville pitching songs: Rosanne Cash included one, *My Baby Thinks He's A Train* on her latest album) singing his own songs, steel guitarist Lucky Oceans (in Australia leading a swing band) singing novelties, and Chris O'Connell (left life on the road for motherhood, though

she sings backup on the band's latest LP) singing ballads, this variety of vocalists didn't produce the gold albums that record companies expect.

Following the old Texas adage, "Dance with the one that brung ya," Benson didn't mess with the band's musical formula even though keeping it on the road was losing him five figures a year. Instead he went where the money was in the music business: movie sound tracks, commercials, and production. His eight movie credits include Ken Harrison's *1918* and Louis Malle's *Alamo Bay* (in which Benson appeared). The band has done commercials for both Budweiser and Lone Star Beer, and public service spots for the Texas Medical Association. In the studio, Benson brought together Willie Nelson and Bruce Hornsby And The Range to record *Nobody There But Me*, written by Hornsby and bassist Charlie Haden. He produced one cut, Aaron Neville singing *Stardust*, on [Dave Grisman's bass player] Rob Wasserman's album of duets which also features Rickie Lee Jones, Stephane Grappelli, and Dan Hicks; and sweetened the tracks of singer/songwriter Darden Smith's debut album with the accordian playing of the late Clifton Chenier.

But when all is said and done—or sung and played—is this Texas swing stuff really jazz? Is being a western band inspired by the great swing bands and their great soloists enough? If Benny Goodman had been born in Texas, would he and Wills have ended up in the same band or could one band have held two such monumental, shall we say, personalities?

"Musically, yes, absolutely. Personality-wise, no band would have been big enough for Benny's ego except his own, and Bob was the same way," says Benson, who means that to be a compliment. Wills hired sax player Ray DeGeer out of Red Nichols' band, the Five Pennies. DeGeer went on to play with Charlie Barnet. Guitarist Jimmy Wyble went from Wills' band to Spade Cooley's to Goodman's and ended up with Red Norvo. "Yes, it makes perfect sense to think of Goodman and Wills in the same band."

You could have judged for yourself in a recent *Austin City Limits* tv show that featured Asleep At The Wheel with a horn section that included such disparate types as Arnett Cobb, Billy Briggs from Wills' band, trumpeter Jerry Byrd who gigged with Charlie Parker, and Link Davis Jr., a former regular with AATW. db

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## MARK EGAN & DANNY GOTTLIEB

IRON HORSE CAFE/  
NORTHAMPTON, MA

**A**lthough they've played together for 17 years in various settings (most notably, as the rhythm section in the Pat Metheny Group from 1977 to 1980), Mark Egan and Danny Gottlieb have only done a handful of concerts as a bass/drums duo. They sometimes appear with Elements, the group they co-lead. But these days they're usually busy working as sidemen or doing sessions.

Because of that, their concert in this tiny (100 seat) western Massachusetts nightclub was eagerly anticipated. The room was filled with musicians, and Egan and Gottlieb themselves appeared to be keyed up for something special.

They didn't disappoint. For over three hours, they played with fire and imagination. Their arrangements frequently suggested the sound of a much larger ensemble (thanks both to digital delays and their own dexterity), and their improvisational skills kept the music fresh and surprising.

Each piece revolved around a basic melodic or rhythmic idea, with most of the development left to the inspiration of the moment. This led to some groping, and several of the pieces went on for just a little bit longer than they should have.

This was more of a problem in the first set, which came dangerously close to the vast wasteland of New Age impressionism from time to time. The music hit more of a



DAVID PINKERTON

groove after the intermission, triggered by the rip-roaring *52 Pickup*; and the last hour of the concert was the most varied and satisfying, with a wild Sun-Ra-meets-the-Grateful-Dead jam, a Brazilian *baone*, and the straightahead bebop of Egan's *Depraw*.

One of the most remarkable pieces was *Valley Hymn*, which featured huge, organ-like chords played by Egan on his double-neck M.V. Pedulla electric bass. Throughout the evening, Egan was ingenious in his control of the tonal and harmonic possibilities of this instrument. He played singing, melodic lines on the fretless four-string upper neck and plucked chords and arpeggios on the fretted eight-string lower neck. Often, he'd play one neck off against the

other, using digital delays to capture one part while he soloed against it.

Gottlieb complemented Egan's complex bass parts beautifully, using not only traps but bongos, bells, percussion, and a Roland drum machine. Gottlieb has exceptional cymbal technique, and he sometimes zeroed in on only the cymbals, setting up shimmering patterns that filled the room with color and light. Given many opportunities to solo, he was never bombastic or pointlessly flashy. His playing was, in a word, *musical*.

Usually, the bass and drums create a foundation for the rest of the band. But, as Egan and Gottlieb proved in this show, sometimes the foundation can be the whole building. —jim roberts

## MARCIO MONTARROYOS and The Music of Rio

MISTURA FINA (and Various Sites)/  
RIO DE JANEIRO

**M**istura Fina is just the right name for one of Rio's best jazz joints. It means "fine mixture"—and so is the music that's evolved in Brazil, a fine mixture of African and European music, not unlike jazz. And not unlike New York, there's always great music happening around Rio.

I enjoyed a wonderful variety of Brazilian music this January when I joined the week-long music tour WBGO (jazz radio in Newark) co-sponsors every year with Brazil Nuts, a Brooklyn travel company. They specialize in showing jazz listeners where the music is happening around Rio, especially the music the usual tourists never know about.

Every night—after some serious sun on the beach at Ipanema and a look around the sights, not to forget the feasting—we'd venture somewhere for the sounds, sometimes to concerts, just as often to out-of-the-way holes-in-the-wall.

We attended a show of Brazilian superstar Chico Buarque, a poetically- and politically-musical artist who's something of a Paul

Simon in Brazil and who's certain to become better known in the U.S. the more Nascimento, Lins, and other Brazilian songwriters become better known.

Twice we enjoyed *seis y meia* (6:30) "happy hour" concerts the government sponsors for working folks (with tickets at two bucks), one show with Gonzaguinha, another of the popular songwriters; another show with Beth Carvalho, the great *sambista* (samba singer). Carvalho's samba band, mostly drums, played with so much gusto that by the climax everyone was dancing in the aisles.

There was also dancing at a show with Beija Flor, one of the best of the *escolas de samba* (samba schools); a favorite every year during Carnaval. Barão (the Baron),

the tour's musical organizer, organized a private party for us at a samba saloon called Barbas where friends—in particular guitarist Sergio Alcantara and an exceptional flutist named Josias—played for us a mini-history of samba. We all danced like crazy.

We also danced at a *forro*, a Northeastern-style disco (complete with strobe) where the accordion-and-percussion band played what's often called Brazilian "country" music. Another unusual musical delight we enjoyed was chorinho, a romantic and quite chamber-like turn-of-the-century flute-and-guitar music.

Best of all was the uniquely Brazilian jazz at Mistura Fina. It's located a block from the beach at Ipanema, just up the street from Garota de Ipanema—Girl from Ipanema—a corner bar re-named for the song inspired there. Jobim was drinking there when that girl of that song walked by from the beach. "Ahhh" . . . Jobim sighed and composed. They now have a lead-sheet of the song on the wall alongside a photo of Jobim and the original *garota* with the girl's daughter, now a beauty herself. It's only natural there to enjoy a Brahma beer and enjoy the parade of lovely *cariocas* wearing (almost *not* wearing) *tangas* walking by. "Ahhh" . . . is nonetheless the word.

Once we'd sighed enough, we'd fall by Mistura Fina. Marcio Montarrojos, a favorite Brazilian trumpeter, who's recorded several albums released in the U.S. (though unavailable in Rio), fronted a quartet the week we were there. Marcio's section featured three of the best of Brasil: keyboardist Luiz Avellar, bassist Nico Assumpção, drummer Paulo Braga—musicians who've recorded and/or toured the U.S. with the likes of Nascimento, Lins, and Djavan.

What they'd often play might be called bossa-funk, a Brazilianized fusion of jazz and rock with a samba feeling. Whatever the grooves, Marcio's solos were straight from be-bop. Sometimes he'd blaze away à la Maynard or play muted à la Miles. Sometimes he'd electronically extend (or echo) himself. Yet even when the band whipped up an outright rock & roll shuffle, Montarrojos most often played straightahead.

Jobim's song *Dindi* was beautiful on the flugelhorn; so was Monk's song *'Round Midnight* with Avellar's synthesizer creating the nightfall. Assumpção's own *Adela*—with a bossa bounce from Braga's drums—was an upbeat finale.

I returned the following night when some of Marcio's friends joined the band: flugelhornist Alcebiades Spindola and alto saxist Mauro Sinese. Altogether they jammed the funk out of Marcio's own *Patamar* with Marcio's trumpet over, under, around, and through the beat. Avellar's own *Licks* climaxed the night. Nico, one of the most flabbergasting electric bass virtuosos I've

heard, thumbed and thumped, even *strummed* the beat full speed ahead—though, again, Sinese and Montarrojos played with the edge (and chops) of a McLean or a Morgan. It's obvious that while they boogie with the best, they've also listened to the best of Blue Note.

Nico laughed when I called the music

bossa-funk. "We don't have a problem with fusion in Brazil," Nico said. "Samba is fusion. African rhythms. Caribbean rhythms. Jazz, rock, funk, bossa nova, we don't care! We play it all!"

—*michael bourne*

(Anyone interested in a Brazil Nuts music tour should write for information: Brazil Nuts, 81 Remsen, Brooklyn, NY 11201.)

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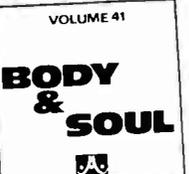
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### PERCUSSION SHOP



**ZILDJIAN'S SPECIAL RECORDING HI-HATS**

AVEDIS ZILDJIAN (Norwell, MA) has introduced two new hi-hat models to its world-famous series of A. Zildjian Cymbals. Designed specifically for use in modern-day recording situations, these hi-hats are smaller in size than has generally been required in the past. Named "Special Recording" Hi-Hats, they are available in a 10-inch size designated 'S.R.10', and a 12-inch size, designated 'S.R.12'. Zildjian's Director of Artist Relations, Lenni DiMuzio, comments, "though for sometime we have been aware of, and have been satisfying a general trend towards 13-inch hi-hats, we recently began to get many requests for even smaller hi-hats specifically for studio use."



**SONOR'S HLD 590**

SONOR (Ashland, VA) introduces a new addition to its Signature Series, the HLD 590 snare drum. The new drum is specially designed to provide the ultimate in sound and structural durability and features a one-piece eight-inch x 14-inch shell made from a cast bronze bell material. The extraordinary projection and sensitivity of the deep bronze shell make the HLD 590 ideal for both the rock and orchestral performer. The new Sonor HLD 590 comes equipped with die-cast hoops, top and bottom, Signature drum fittings, a parallel snare mechanism, and extra snares.

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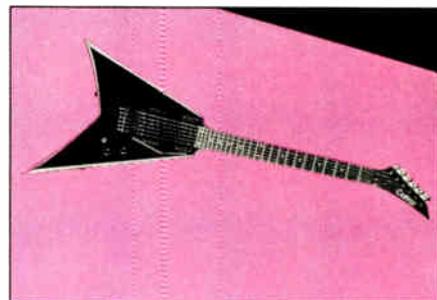
KURZWEIL (Waltham, MA) announces the introduction of the Ensemble Grande Piano (EGP), a portable instrument which combines the features of a concert grand piano with other digitally-sampled orchestral sounds. The Ensemble Grande Piano features a 76-note keyboard with full velocity sensitivity and specially weighted keys for a smooth, piano-like feel. Located right above the keyboard, a streamlined control panel makes it easy to summon the Ensemble Grande Piano's array of instrumental sounds. For virtually infinite add-on capability, the Ensemble Grande Piano is equipped with MIDI In, Out, and Thru connectors. The Ensemble Grande can be played through its own built-in speakers. Or it can be connected to any external sound system—such as a home stereo setup—via its stereo outputs.



**TECHNICS' NEWEST DIGITAL ENSEMBLE**

TECHNICS (Secaucus, NJ) is offering their newest Digital Ensemble, model SX-PR80. It delivers full orchestra sound from 20-PCM sampled instruments. The user can record what they've created with the use of the internal play sequencer and store those creations with the built-in disk drive housed inside the piano's satin black cabinet with roll-top cover. The user is in immediate command of 20 PCM-sampled instrument sounds, and two different sounds can be chosen and played simultaneously by pressing a single key.

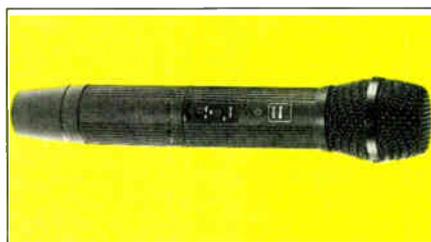
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**CARVIN'S ULTRA V**

CARVIN CORP. (Escondido, CA) is offering the Carvin Ultra V, made of eastern hardwood maple. It has neck-through-the-body construction, which aids in sustain and gives a heelless neck to body joint. An ebony fingerboard with a flatter 16-inch radius is used along with jumbo nickel silver frets for quicker lead playing. Standard electronics include a three-position pickup selector, one volume and a tone. Standard colors are: black, white, red, and clear maple. Carvin guitars are only sold by direct mail. For more information and a free 84-page catalog, write: Carvin Corporation, 1155 Industrial Ave., Escondido, CA 92025, or call their toll-free number at (800) 854-2235.

### ELECTRONIC GEAR



**SHURE'S WIRELESS MICROPHONE**

SHURE BROTHERS INC. (Evanston, IL) has announced the introduction of the Shure W15HT Wireless Microphone Transmitter, a hand-held unit designed for use with Shure Wireless Microphone Receivers. The W15HT is initially available in two versions: the W15HT/58, which is equipped with a Shure SM58 dynamic microphone element, and the W15HT/87, supplied with a Shure SM87 condenser element. Both the SM85 and SM87 heads may be used interchangeably with any W15HT Transmitter. The W15HT's special dipole antenna system provides users with noise-free signals, minimal dropout, and unobtrusive appearance. The W15HT's reliable performance is enhanced by the "mirror image" compander circuitry incorporated in the other Shure wireless products. The W15HT/87 is pictured. db



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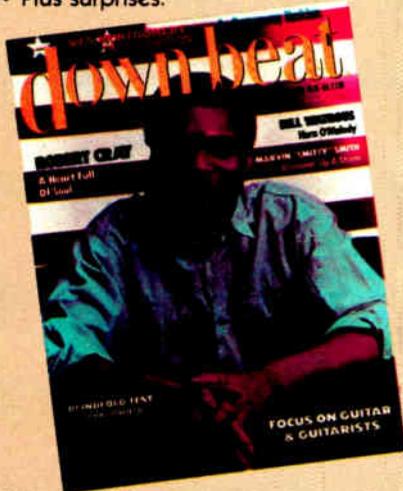
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# pro session

## WES MONTGOMERY'S SOLO ON MISTY— A GUITAR TRANSCRIPTION

by Joe Dennison

**W**es Montgomery's live version of *Misty* (from *The Small Group Recordings*—Verve 2-2513) was recorded in 1965 at New York City's Half Note. The recording is a testament to Wes' fertile melodic imagination and to his technical mastery of the guitar. The following transcription contains the first chorus of Wes' solo.

In *Misty*, Wes displays a rich harmonic vocabulary, coloring the basic chords with a variety of scales and modes. Measures 4, 16, 20, and 28 are good examples of his use of the altered dominant sound ( $\flat 9$ ,  $\sharp 9$ ,  $\sharp 11$ , and  $\flat 13$  extensions), and measure 7 contains the lydian dominant mode (9,  $\sharp 11$ , 13). The blues appear in m. 1-4, 24-25, 32, 61, and 64; and Wes implies chords not played by the pianist in m. 10, 38-39, and 60.

Wes' use of sequence and repetition with embellishment help to create a logical and coherent solo. For example, m. 1-2 appear again, altered melodically in m. 3-4 and 21-24, and m. 19-20 are restated in m. 53-55.

There is an overall balance of both phrase length and content present in *Misty*. He contrasts simple, lyrical phrases (m. 1-4, 21-24, 49-50) with complex ones, and plays lines containing wide intervallic leaps (m. 19-20, 28) and scalar (m. 25, 39-40) or chromatic passages (m. 13).

Wes creates lines of rhythmic complexity and interest, playing on various levels of rhythmic subdivision throughout the solo. In m. 37-39, he stretches a figure across the bar lines, and in m. 55-56 he superimposes a four-note motif on the triplet pattern.

Wes explores the entire range of the guitar during the solo and uses a wide variety of articulations, accents, and phrase dynamics.

Handwritten musical score for guitar, featuring various chords and fret numbers. The score is written on ten staves. Chords include Gmaj7, Dm7, G7, Cmaj7, (Dm7), (G7alt) Cmaj7, C#m7, F#7, Em7, A7, Am7, E7, Am7, D7, Gmaj7, Dm7, G7, Cmaj7, F7, Bm7, Em7, Am7, (Eb7) D7, Gmaj7, D7sus, and Gmaj7. Fret numbers 33, 37, 41, 45, 49, 53, 57, and 61 are indicated. The score ends with the initials 'db'.

## on the beat

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

content of music cannot be separated from the number of musicians and instruments needed to create a work of art. The ordinance restricts the cultural expression of musical composers."

Moreover, the judge said that the City failed to prove the law had any direct connection to the "traffic and congestion concerns" that prompted enforcement in the first place. And that arbitrarily restricting the size of bands ignored the technology of amplifiers and synthesizers by which one musician can outblast a large ensemble of acoustic players.

Saxe's decision did not strike down the entire law. It just eliminated its most enforced provision, thus allowing a host of clubs throughout the city to expand their booking.

The lifting of "Prohibition" had immediate effects. Pat Mikell of Mikell's on

the Upper West Side of Manhattan told the New York Times, "The first thing I did when I got the call about the decision was call Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers." Larry Heller of the West End Cafe declared, "We're going to go full force like we used to," promising to book latin bands on a regular schedule. And Warren Chiasson, a vibist who participated in the lawsuit proffered said, "I think the music is going to get much more interesting in town now."

The City has not yet decided whether to appeal the judge's decision. In the meantime, however, it can no longer flex its muscles and padlock clubs or cabarets in the name of preserving public safety. Instead, New York City should reach out to its tired, its poor, its huddled masses yearning to breathe free—commonly known as musicians without gigs—and allow them the same opportunities afforded ordinary citizens; that is, the right to work.

And, the size of the aggregates on stage? Pick 'em. The judge says we can. db



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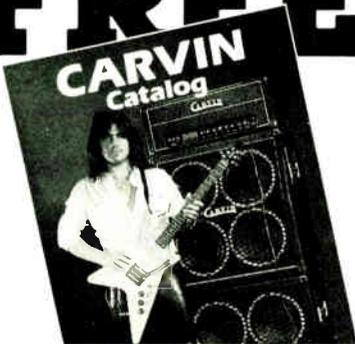
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231 W. 6th St. Powell, WY 82435; (307)754-6307 for more details . . . audio portrait: a two-hour documentary entitled **Bill Evans: An Audio Portrait** has been made available to public radio stations via satellite. The program is presented in chronological sequence and features Evans' work with such greats as Miles Davis and Scott LaFaro, in addition to examining Evans' recording career and his contributions as a soloist and composer. Interviews with former musicians Evans played with are included. The document is funded by a grant from the NEA and is produced and written by Beth Schenker. Distributed by Murray Street Enterprise, New York, through the National Endowment for the Arts Marketing Co-op. Contact Leslie Peters (212)619-1475 for further info . . . world class launch: **Victor Music Industries, Inc.** (VMI), the record division of JVC, Ltd. of Japan, and **GRP Records, Inc.**, the New York-based contemporary jazz label, announced recently that the JVC "World Class Music" label will be available in North America. The newly-formed agreement establishes GRP Records as the North American licensee of VMI-produced recordings distributed under the JVC label logo. The first seven recordings were recently released on compact disc and cassette, including one by Gary Burton. Distribution in the U.S. will be through MCA Dist. Corp. and a newly-formed independent rep. organization which will exclusively focus on audio accounts . . . Another summer camp: **Tidewater Music Camp** for young musicians opens this summer for its 18th season at St. Mary's College of Maryland. The camp, focusing on American music, has two sessions and annually features a nationally-known guest composer. Session I for students 14 years or younger will be held 6/26-7/2. Session II for students 14 and up will be held 7/3-16. For more info contact Chesapeake SummerArts (301)862-0216 . . . piano jazz: **Marian McPartland's Piano Jazz**, public radio's most widely carried jazz series, is now entering its ninth season. Featuring 13 new hour-long programs, McPartland's guests will include Henry Butler, Elaine Elias, and Muhal Richard

Abrams . . . guitar workshop: the **National Guitar Summer Workshop** will be held at the Canterbury School, in New Milford, CT (7/9-8/21). To help celebrate their new location as instructors will be such guitar greats as John Abercrombie, Larry Coryell, Chet Atkins, and Steve Swallow. For more info: David Smolover, Dir., NGSW, Dept. PR, Box 222, Lakeside, CT 06758 (203)567-8529 . . . NEA addition: last month **down beat** reported that Billy Taylor received the 1988 Jazz Masters Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts Music Program for \$20,000. Other recipients of the same award were **Art Blakey** and **Lionel Hampton** . . . beate art: twelve original **Beatle album covers** as prints are now available plus an anthology that includes them all. The art prints, created by Tom Klupeful—formerly head of graphic design at New York's Museum of Modern Art—use the finest in multi-color lithography and are printed on 80-pound cover stock. They are also available as museum-quality art prints. For more info: (800)453-9200 . . . world premiere: the first ever **Black Music Repertory Ensemble**, a group of 13 renowned musicians who perform music written by black composers from 1800 to the present, recently performed their world premiere at Columbia College, Chicago. The Ensemble performance featured the music of Scott Joplin, David Baker, and Will Marion Cook . . . dynamic duo: **Herbie Hancock** and his band will be touring with **Chick Corea** and his band in June. Benson & Hedges is sponsoring it. Details to follow . . . fund benefit: "Jazz! Jazz! Jazz!," a concert with Wynton Marsalis, J.J. Johnson, and Buddy DeFranco, among others, will be held at the Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center 4/20 at 8pm. Dr. Billy Taylor will serve as MC to the event which will benefit the **National Association of Jazz Educators (NAJE)** Scholarship Fund. For more info: (813) 222-1051 . . . the 7th annual **Jazz Festival of the University of Illinois** at Chicago springs to life 5/19-21. Featured will be the Dizzy Gillespie Quintet with Sam Rivers, and the Count Basie Orchestra under the direction of Frank Foster. For more info: (312) 413-5070 . . .

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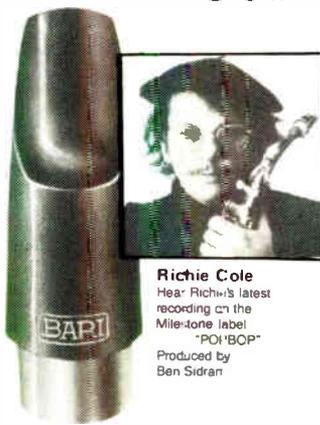
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# auditions

## down beat SPOTLIGHTS DESERVING YOUNG MUSICIANS



**YIL OZOAY** is a 31-year-old saxophonist from Istanbul, Turkey. He left his native country to play saxophone, against the wishes of his father, Turkey's most accomplished saxophonist. After years of adversity he started playing alto sax in Ireland. From there he formed a trio which toured Europe for three years. Offers of session recordings brought him to the Caribbean where he cut records for four-and-a-half years, playing with many musicians, including violinist Didier Lockwood. In the Summer of 1987, he arrived in Boston where he met Emilio Lyons. Lyons sold him his first Selmer Mark VI alto and soprano. He later acquired a Mark VI tenor. He now lives in Montreal, Canada, where he is composing for an album benefitting Amnesty International. He is also playing clubs with Dwain Ford, an established jazz pianist, and other ensembles.



**DAVID KUBLANK**, 22, began playing the alto saxophone when he was nine under the direction of his father, then later settled into playing the tenor. The Libertyville, Illinois native is currently studying with Stephan Duke and Lawrence Panella at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb.

Kublank is currently playing in the **db** award-winning NIU Wind Ensemble and the NIU Jazz Ensemble under the direction of

Ron Modell. This past summer, he performed in the Six Flags Great America Marching Band in Gurnee, Illinois, as their lead alto saxophonist. During his college years, Kublank has performed with people such as Willie Pickens, Dartanyan Brown, Ken Iverson, Mike Pendowski, Dennis DiBlasio, Carl Fontana, and Randy Brecker. Kublank's influences include Randy and Michael Brecker, Cannonball Adderly, John Coltrane, and Dexter Gordon.



### **CARROLL DASHIELL**

is a unique bassist from Washington, DC. He is a unique bassist in that he performs classical music as well as the many contemporary and jazz forms of music. With citations in *Who's Who In Music* and **down beat**, Carroll has been recognized for excellence in the music industry not just as a bassist but also as a composer/arranger and musical director. His performance history includes concerts with the Boston Pops, National Symphony, and Washington Philharmonia Orchestras, as well as performance dates with Billy Taylor, Les McCann, and Ethel Ennis.

Carroll Dashiell and his CVD Ensemble have recently released their debut album as a collective unit entitled *I've Paid My Dues*, available on CVD Records (mc-20820). "It was one of those musical experiences that words can barely do justice to." "Such exciting music is very rare," say the *Washington Post* and the *Miami Herald* respectively. This group has had the pleasure of being the opening act for Melba Moore, Jerry Butler, and Pieces Of A Dream, and shared the stage with Stephanie Mills and Esther Satterfield. Carroll Dashiell and the CVD Ensemble is gradually becoming one of the favorite concert attractions to some of the major universities, indoor/outdoor concert arenas, and clubs on the East Coast.



### **LAWRENCE KOHUT**

, 20, is from Arlington Heights, Illinois. A bassist and pianist, he began piano studies at age eight, trumpet and guitar at 10, french horn at 12, and taught himself electric bass at age 13. In high school, Kohut played lead trumpet in all their bands. He took a serious interest in bass his junior year. He attended Berklee College of Music on a scholarship where he studied with Bruce Gertz. Kohut received scholarships on piano and bass from Millikin University in Decatur, Illinois. He transferred to Northern Illinois University in 1986 where he began formal classical training on string bass.

Kohut is currently a junior at NIU, where he plays in the jazz ensemble, the philharmonic, and several small groups. He is co-founder of the Nagtet, a working quartet which tends towards the "ECM side" of straightahead jazz. Kohut has professional recording experience, and has performed with Randy Brecker, Carl Fontana, and Dennis DiBlasio



### **FELTON OFFARD**

, 21-year-old guitarist, is from Freeport, Illinois. His interest in the guitar began at age 14. In high school, Offard played in the band Generation—a funk group now signed with Tabu Records. Offard is currently a senior at Northern Illinois University and a member of their jazz ensemble. He is working on a solo album and will graduate with a B.M. in Guitar Performance.

Offard has toured with various artists, including Slide Hampton,

Randy Brecker, and Dennis DeBlasio, and been on dates with Rich Matteson, Carl Fontana, Bunky Green, and Dorothy Paige Turner. He has appeared on local tv shows playing solo guitar and recorded with jazz and gospel groups. Offard said of his early training, "I believe that playing in a church at a young age really helped me to develop my time and ability to groove." He sights Wes Montgomery and John Coltrane as his main influences.



### **Vernell Brown, Jr.**

, 17, launched his music career at the age of four when he began studying the piano and the drums at Grants Music School in Los Angeles. He was enrolled at the Univ. of So. California Community School of Performing Arts where he studied percussion instructions. After three years there, he was given an award for Outstanding Achievement in Music. Brown also attended the Thirty-Second Street/USC Magnet School. In addition to receiving instruction in violin and percussion, he was concert master for the school orchestra and drummer for the school jazz band for three years.

Brown is currently enrolled at Hamilton High Music Academy as a Virtuoso Music/Piano major, receiving extensive instruction in piano and theory. He is also a member of Hamilton's instrumental jazz and piano ensembles. Brown has also studied jazz improvisation at California State University, Los Angeles. He is currently composing and studying under the auspices of mentor Terry Trotter, pianist/arranger. **db**

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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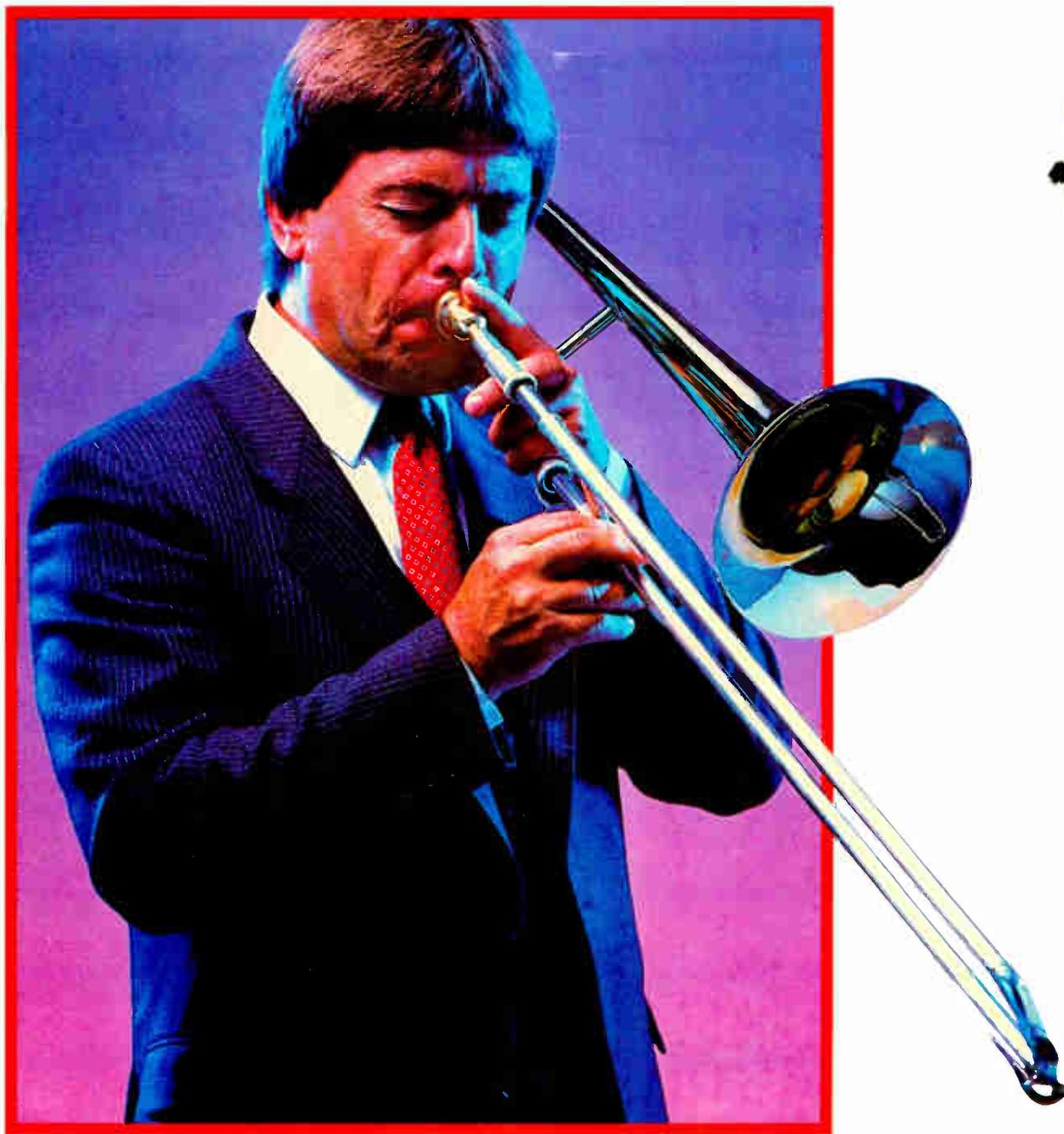
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