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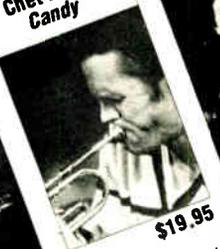
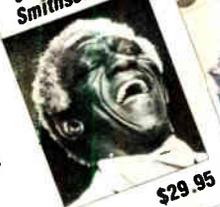
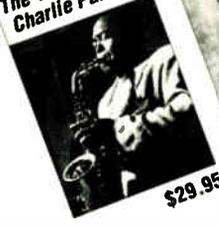
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ANDY FREEBERG

Sonny Rollins



Bill Cosby



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Cover photograph of Sonny Rollins by Phil Broy; photograph of Bill Cosby courtesy of The Brokaw Company.

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down beat

For Contemporary Musicians

JULY 1988

VOLUME 55 NO. 7



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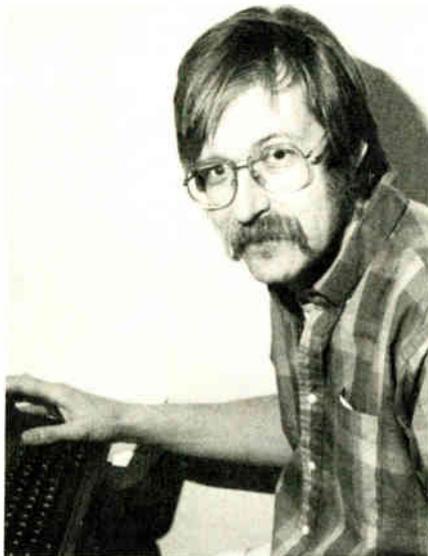
"Howdy, down beat"

by Dave Helland

I come from a musically disadvantaged family. We didn't have a piano and no one could carry a tune. My first musical memory—besides Lawrence Welk—is of a couple of cheap LPs my dad Harley bought along with the family's first record player. One was a Ray Charles record on a budget label: slow and bluesy, not the gospel shout r&b that produced his biggest hits. The other was a Woody Herman LP, with *Woodchopper's Ball*, that I played at 45 rpm. That, I figured out much later, was the sound of bebop.

Except for six weeks of trumpet lessons one summer, I have always been a consumer—not a maker—of music, a vinyl junkie. Till I went to college, my musical biography was a list of albums I had bought: the Beatles' *Rubber Soul*, Ramsey Lewis' *Hang On Sloopy*, Bob Dylan's *Greatest Hits*, and the first albums by the Grateful Dead (the cover fascinated me) and Paul Butterfield. Beats me how I knew

I'd like something you don't hear in Des Moines, namely, the blues.



I didn't get into serious jazz till the early '70s, when I heard Miles Davis' *Portrait Of Jack Johnson*, around the same time I was

developing a taste for bluegrass and country honky tonk. The review copies of rock albums I received at the *Daily Iowan* got traded for Miles' *Kind Of Blue*, Hank Williams' *Greatest Hits*, Oliver Nelson's *Blues And The Abstract Truth*, Bob Wills' *Big Balls In Cow Town*, Eric Dolphy's *Out To Lunch*, Bill Monroe's *Lonesome Traveller*, and a Mahavishnu Orchestra LP I never listen to anymore. More importantly, I got the chance to hear jazz in concert—Benny Goodman, Preservation Hall, Return To Forever, Dizzy Gillespie, Ella Fitzgerald, Herbie Hancock's Mwandishi band—when the University of Iowa completed its concert hall. And I learned to jitterbug by dancing with the women married to the members of Longshot, my favorite western swing band.

So, when I moved to Chicago in 1980 to work at the Chicago Board Options Exchange, I had a pretty limited idea of what jazz is. Jazz was recorded music. People used to dance to it. You could read about it in books and **down beat**, but rarely in *Crawdaddy*, *Rolling Stone*, or the *Des Moines Register*. Judging from the concert line-up at UI, live jazz was something that died out during World War II and had just been revived by its fusion with rock.

A serious surprise waited for me at Joe Segal's Jazz Showcase. In the basement of a Rush St. disco, this smokey, low ceilinged club, run by a man who followed the dictates of his own taste week after week, became my weekend home. I heard Art Blakey, Zoot Sims, the Mingus Dynasty, and dozens of others. I had the chance to hear what jazz really is: blues and swing, an individual's voice, and, through improvisation, a different show every night.

Now, after 15 years of free lancing—having written about everything from blues, classical, and jazz piano players to bluegrass fiddlers, from rock guitarists to a man who wanted to string telephone cables across the Iowa River and call it a harp—I've been hired as associate editor at **down beat**. While I freely admit to a predilection for trashy rock bands from the '60s, singing along with Bill Monroe records when no one else is home, and believing that jazz has been both helped and harmed by the attitudes of the classical musical establishment, this is the last you'll hear about these matters from me. I won't reargue the moldy fig debate of the '40s nor press John Ephland for space to cover a reunion of the Human Beinz. **down beat** will continue to be the magazine "For Contemporary Musicians." Mostly that will mean jazz, blues, and serious pop music, just as it has for the past 54 years.

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Friday, June 17, 8:00PM

**Pine Knob Music Theatre,
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Ohio Theatre, Columbus
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**Nautica Amphitheatre,
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cigarette, FTC Report Feb. '85.

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chords & discords

SYNDICATED

Although there are often articles in *down beat* that disturb me, thankfully there are those like Josef Woodard's interview with Joe Zawinul (Apr. '88) that keep the magazine at the top of my monthly reading list. I had unconsciously not planned on following the trail of the Zawinul Syndicate, but since reading the article, I am anticipating obtaining their album, *The Immigrants*. I was happy to see that my assessment of the playing in the movie *Round Midnight* was similar to Zawinul's.

James S. Dorsey
Fort Walton Beach, Florida

DEEP AND WIDE

Although I have known of Carlos Santana for some time, I never listened to him. The article by James Schaffer (Feb. '88) piqued my interest but it wasn't until I turned on an early morning tv talk show while in the U.S. on a lecture trip, that I was blown over by him playing *Blues For Salvador*. Here is a musician giving a lot of his inner musical thoughts to a wide

audience . . . and they are the better for it. Thank you for an insightful article on an honest musician and for allowing me to expand my musical horizons.

V. Snieckus
Waterloo, Ontario

BAND DATES

I read with great interest your piece on the welcome return of J. J. Johnson. I'd like to point out that Gene Kalbacher errs when he sets the date of the important Johnson/Sonny Stitt (his record debut on tenor)/John Lewis session that produced *Elora*, etc., as being a month prior to the sides J.J. did with Bird for the Dial label. That date took place December 17, 1947—the Stitt session didn't take place till October 17, 1949. For the record, J.J. did do a session with Leo Parker for Savoy exactly a week following the Dial session.

Also, in the piece on the Bob Stone Big Band, the Basie arranger referred to as Nester Cole is surely (Sammy) Nestico.

On the subject of big bands, we had an exciting evening when Paquito D'Rivera

conducted and played with the McGill (University) Alumni Band in a concert that included big band charts of Paquito pieces such as *Wapango*, *Song For My Son*, and *A Lo Tristano*.

Len Dobbin
St. Hubert, Quebec

SILVER RECORDS

In the letter from Flavio Gominho, Waltham, MA (Apr. '88), incorrect information was listed regarding Horace Silver's recordings. Printed was the old address. The correct address is Silveto Productions, Emerald Records, Box 1852, Santa Monica, CA 90406. Thank you for your attention to this.

Jacky Schneider
Chicago, IL

SEARCHING FOR SID

The Bay Area Reference Center (BARC) is a federally-funded project of the San Francisco Public Library, providing reference services to public libraries in Northern California. We do not charge these libraries for our services. I am trying to help a library patron find information on jazz trombonist, Sid Slider or Slyder, who played in a small touring band in the Midwest (Chicago, Minneapolis) in the 1920's. If anyone can tell me where I might find information about him, I would be very appreciative.

Inez Cohen
Reference Librarian
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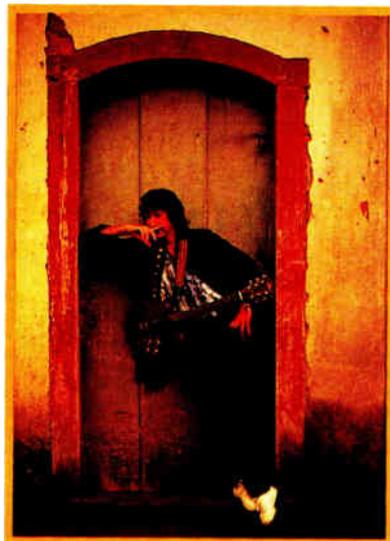
VIEWING THE BIRD

In response to Mr. Lindqvist's inquiry (May '87) concerning Charlie Parker film footage shot by *Life* magazine photographer Gjon Mili, yes some *silent* film of Bird does exist and is available in the program *Celebrating Bird: The Triumph Of Charlie Parker* on Sony Video Software [see Video Reviews, June '88]. The video cassette is available from Jazz Video Treasures, 333 Beech Ave., Rm 5D, Garwood, NJ 07027. Your readers may be interested to know that our company has recently published our second jazz video catalog which describes over 200 jazz video programs. Most of these are not available in retail stores. Our catalog is available with a payment of \$1 (\$2 foreign).

Marcia Kriebel
Garwood, NJ

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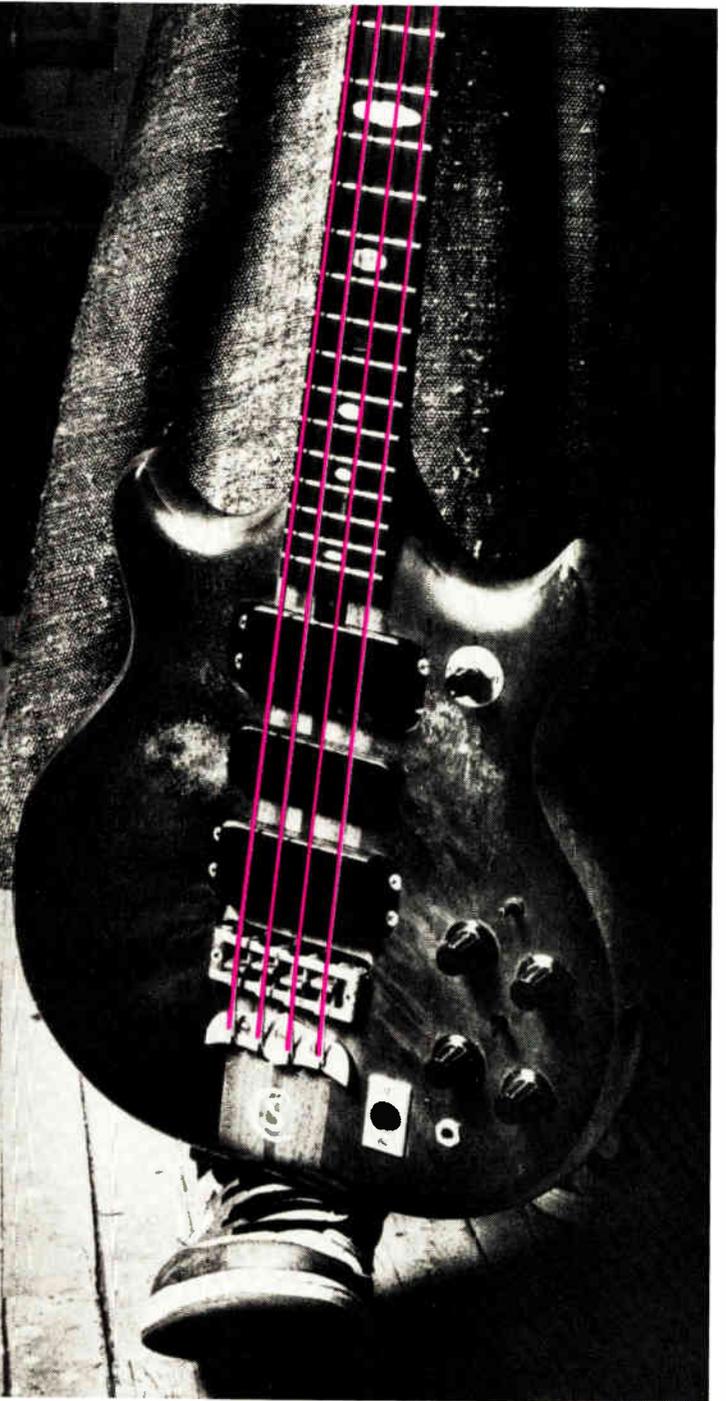
"If This Bass Could Only Talk" is 100% instrumental. 100% true to Stanley Clarke's original jazz vision.

In addition to jazz classics ("Goodbye Pork Pie Hat"), state-of-the-art fusion ("Workin' Man") and challenging compositions few other bass players would attempt ("Tradition"), the new album includes the funky Jimmy Jam/Terry Lewis/Janet Jackson composition, "Funny How Time Flies (When You're Having Fun)," and the airy, up-to-the-minute "Come Take My Hand."

Among the greats joining Stanley Clarke and his bass on this special release are Stewart Copeland, Wayne Shorter, Paulinho Da Costa and, with a tap dance solo on "Basically Taps," Gregory Hines.

"If This Bass Could Only Talk" will be the talk of the jazz world for years to come. It's the new album only Stanley Clarke's bass could have recorded.

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NEW YORK BRASS CONFERENCE

NEW YORK—The 16th annual meeting of the New York Brass Conference convened at the Roosevelt Hotel this spring and honored the life and work of trumpeter, educator, music publisher, and Conference founder, Charles Colin. Previous honorees have included Dizzy Gillespie, Herb Albert, Clark Terry, Roy Eldridge, Louis Armstrong, and Maynard Ferguson.

Colin, whose career spans a half-century, has been a stalwart presence on the city's music scene. After touring briefly with Charlie Barnet, he settled in New York. Aided by referrals from Manny Goldrich, owner of the famed Manny's Musical Instruments Store, Colin opened a teaching studio on West 48th Street and amassed a roster of

students and influential supporters who turned to him for all their brass needs.

Since then he has become an ardent spokesman on behalf of the brass player, authoring basic method books and devising exercises and techniques for maintaining the embouchure. His published work has been the basis for many a young player's study.

The New York Brass Conference is Colin's baby for creating scholarship funds for young players. It features performances, tributes, raffles, lectures, rehearsals, and open-ended hobnobbing by musicians, educators, and instrument manufacturers. The three-day event covers the musical spectrum. This year's edition of the conference saw a multitude of



From left, Randy Brecker, bassist Mike Richmond, Marvin Stamm, Bobby Shew, drummer Jimmy Madison, Jon Faddis, Lew Soloff (not pictured, pianist Harold Danko).

brass ensembles, including Amy Duncan's Brass Tacks, the Sal Salvatore Big Band, and the Wayne Andre Septet.

The weekend's activities were capped by a "Salute to Charles Colin" that featured guest artists

Randy Brecker, Lew Soloff, Jon Faddis, and Marvin Stamm, all of whom donated their services to support Colin's efforts and, in effect, express their indebtedness to him and the cause he promotes

—Jeff Levenson

Potpourri

Wanted: the Los Angeles city council is offering a \$10,000 reward for information leading to the conviction of the assailants of Grammy award-winning guitarist **Larry Carlton**, who was shot in the neck outside his LA home in early April. He is undergoing a lengthy recuperation at home. Fans can write him care of MCA Records, 70 University City, CA 91608 . . . jazz fund: the **Cuyahoga Community College Foundation** has dedicated an **Oscar Peterson** scholarship for talented, economically-disadvantaged music students. Proceeds from the fifth annual "Toast To Jazz" scholarship benefit, held during the CCC's JazzFest '88, went to the Peterson endowment . . . blue wood: to kick off the fundraising drive for the **Muddy Waters** exhibit at the **Delta Blues Museum** in Clarksdale, MS, Texas rockers **ZZ Top** presented the museum with a solid-body guitar made from a piece of cypress salvaged from the cabin in which Muddy was raised . . . nth degree: the Indiana University School of Music has bestowed an honorary doctorate on Hoosier **J. J. Johnson** . . . if I had a plaque:

Bruce Cockburn was recently presented the Berklee College of Music Distinguished Alumni Award by songwriting department chairman Jack Perricone in a ceremony at the Berklee Performance Center . . . out of the attic: **Mercer Ellington** has donated more than 6,000 musical documents and artifacts of his father's to the Smithsonian on the Duke's recent b'day . . . recording resource: the 1988 **MIX Annual Directory Of Recording Industry Facilities And Services** lists over 7,000 companies in the Western hemisphere that provide recording, mastering, pressing, and tape duplication facilities, plus equipment manufacturers, recording schools, and equipment rentals. This \$25,500-page book can be ordered by calling (800) 233-9604 or (415) 653-3307 . . . sheet music: **Prospectus**, **Steve Lacy's** piano scores and instrumental arrangements, has been published by Margun Music. Check your local music store . . . homecoming: **Bill Hughes**, Basie trombonist for 33 years, has taught in the Basie Way clinic during Charter Day Festivities at Howard U., where he graduated in 1952 . . . r&r is here to stay:

Minneapolis' Guthrie Theatre feted writers **Jerry Leiber** and **Mike Stoller**—composers of such milestones in the history of Western civilization as *Stand By Me*, *Jailhouse Rock*, and *Love Potion #9*—with a musical salute, *Baby, That Was Rock & Roll* and the declaration of "Lieber and Stoller Day" by Twin City mayors Donald Fraser and George Latimer . . . jitterbug sabbath: the **New York Swing Dance Society** hosts a dance with live music every Sunday at the Cat Club. For info: (212) 713-5148 . . . untraditional: the ninth annual **New Music Seminar** takes place 7/16-20 in NYC. For details: New Music Seminar, 632 Broadway, Ninth floor, New York City 10012 . . . swing schools: the **Clark Terry Great Plains Jazz Camp**, held annually on the campus of Emporia State University, Emporia, KS, runs by and **James Moody** will perform nightly. For details: (316) 343-1200. The **Stanford Jazz Workshop** faculty will include **Joe Henderson**, **Rufus Reid**, **Jim McNeely**, and **Billy Hart**. The session for teens runs 7/31-8/1; acuts and advanced students, 8/7-13. For information write Jim Nadel, Stanford Jazz

Workshop, Box 11291 Stanford, CA 94309 . . . no top 40: the **New Music Distribution Service's** annual catalog *Ear*, listing more than 2,000 titles of experimental, avant garde, and ethnic musics on 400 labels is available free from Jazz Composer's Orchestra, Dept C-4, 500 Broadway, New York City, 10012 . . . premieres: **Stan Getz** and the **Stanford University Orchestra** played **William Thomas McKinley's** *Tenor Rhapsody* in San Francisco recently. **Dave Brubeck** and the **Greg Smith Singers** presented Bru's *New England Suite*, commissioned by *Advest* as part of a program instituted by the Hartford *Courant* honoring Connecticut artists. The North Texas State University **1 O'Clock Lab Band** and **Frank Mantooth** introduced his *For The Sake Of Art* and *If The Shew Fits* at the International Trumpet Guild Conference in Denton, TX recently. The pieces, to be recorded by Art Farmer and Bobby Shew, respectively, won the ITG's Composition Contest . . . free pass: composer/producer **Wayne Cobham** demonstrated the MIDI Time Code/FSK interface by Passport

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

BLACK MUSIC ENSEMBLE DEBUTS

ROCHESTER, NY—Samuel Floyd had a wish: that his students could hear the work of 19th century black composers. But scores were few and even piano sheet music was hard to find with no bibliographic works to guide his search. The more he dug up, the more dissatisfied he became. Floyd wanted to hear this music the way it was written to be performed—by a band or chamber orchestra. Thus, in the early '70s was born the idea for the Black Music Repertory Ensemble.

"I had a very selfish motive in forming the Ensemble. I wanted to serve the public, of course. But mostly I wanted to hear the music for my own benefit," explained Dr. Floyd—head of the Center for Black Music Research at Chicago's Columbia College—after the completion of the 14-member ensemble's premier residency with

performances here at the Eastman School, at Chicago's Getz Theatre, and for school children in Chicago through the Children and Adolescents Forum and the Urban Gateways.

The ensemble's music ranges from early 19th century dances and marches to turn-of-the-century rags to contemporary choral pieces. The earlier works were arranged by composer Hale Smith, professor emeritus at the University of Connecticut and arranger for Chico Hamilton, Henry Threadgill, and Ahmad Jamal.

Working mainly from piano sheet music, Smith achieved a sound consistent with the period by arranging the pieces around a string quartet with horns or reeds commonly used at the time. "The ensemble's instrumentation is good for music ranging over a wide period of time, but it doesn't work for

'30s jazz," said Smith. "Much of this is dance music. You don't have to play it slowly as long as it is not so fast that dance becomes uncomfortable. The tempo should flow so that it sings."

David Baker's song cycle for Dr. Martin Luther King, *Through This Vale Of Tears*, ran the gamut of styles used by black composers. While the gospel-derived sections were arranged to sound more parochial, the songs by contemporary poets were polytonal.

"My own feelings about the inclusion of my work in the debut are those of great pride," said Baker, who is chairman of the Indiana University jazz department and recipient of *down beat's* 1987 Lifetime Achievement Award. "I consider Dr. Floyd's work to be one of the most significant treatments of black American music ever. I would be hard pressed to single

out another event that has the potential for furthering the music and exposing works long buried. This is one of the few times this music has been presented in its proper historical context, in an authentic and dignified manner, from beginning to end."

The highlight of the early compositions was A. J. R. Conner's *Five-Step Waltz* written in 5/4 time in the 1830s. Smith's orchestrations gave unexpected historical depth to musical forms previously dismissed as antique, naive, or quaint. Remarkable ensemble playing distinguished the difficult but rewarding piece by the ensemble's conductor, T. J. Anderson. Trumpeter David Spenser and the vocalists, soprano Bernadine Oliphint, tenor William Brown, and bass-baritone Donnie Ray Albert, all gave outstanding performances. The performance was broadcast on National Public Radio's *Performance Today*.

—jim dejong



YOU SAY IT'S YOUR BIRTHDAY . . . Bill Cosby (left) and Paquito D'Rivera (right) celebrate with Lionel Hampton at his birthday bash at NYC's Town Hall.



. . . IT'S MY BIRTHDAY TOO: (From left) Harold Nicholas, Toots Thielemans, bassist Jay Leonhart, and members of the Juilliard String Quartet toast Stephane Grappelli's birthday at Carnegie Hall.

POTPOURRI . . .

and the Akai MPC60 MIDI Production Center by Roger Linn at **Studio Pass**, New York City's not-for-profit audio production facility, as part of the studio's MIDI Monday program. For details on this free weekly event call (212) 431-1130 . . . early Xmas: **A&M Records** laid \$5 million on the **Special Olympics International**, proceeds from the label's *A Very Special Christmas* which featured Santa's helpers Run-D.M.C., Sting, the Pointer Sisters, Madonna, and Bruce Springsteen . . . Luncelford revisited: the

American Jazz Orchestra featuring **Jon Hendricks**

recently played the music of the Jimmie Lunceford Orchestra at Cooper Union in NYC. The AJO's musical director and chief conductor **John Lewis** swung the band through *For Dancers Only*, *Margie*, *Cheatin' On Me*, and other Lunceford hits . . . tune up: **Robert Fripp** will conduct a six-day guitar seminar in Los Angeles during September. For details: Guitar Craft, Box 5306, North Hollywood, CA, 91616-5306 . . . the eight-week First Jersey Jazz Series kicks off with vibist Khan Jamal on 6/23. The free concerts, held each Thursday at noon on Pier 16 in Jersey City, are recorded by WBGO-FM for their



ON TOUR: Guitarist Carlos Santana and saxist Wayne Shorter will combine forces for a 27-city European tour this summer.

American Jazz Radio Festival heard around the country on National Public Radio . . . more blues: entry forms for the fifth annual **National Blues Amateur Talent Contest** are available from the National Blues Connection Assn., 352 Beale St., Memphis, TN 38103 . . . farewell: **Tina Turner's** 220-show farewell tour, seen by over 3.5 million fans, used up 24 miles of gaffers tape and three miles of guitar strings in 13 months . . .

Fest Scene

This year's **Mellon Jazz Festival**, 6/17-26, is dedicated to Dizzy Gillespie and features Airtio and Flora Purim, the String Trio of New York, Carlos Santana and Wayne Shorter, Sun Ra, Lionel Hampton, Dave Brubeck, Bobby McFerrin, and Dizzy's All-Star Big Band on 6/22. Concerts will be held at the Academy of Music in Philadelphia. For a complete schedule call (215) 561-5686.

Weekend Blues Bashes on Beale St. in Memphis are scheduled for 6/17-19, 7/1-4, 8/19-21, 9/2-4, and 10/31-11/6. For details call the Blues Hotline: (800) 334-5177.

The **Paul Masson Summer Series** running from 6/2-10/25 will feature Al Jarreau, Jean-Luc Ponty, Stephane Grappelli and David Grisman, Cab Calloway, Stan Getz, Wynton Marsalis, Rosemary Clooney with the Harry James Band as well as rock, folk, pop, and classical acts. For a brochure and ticket-order form write Paul Masson Summer Series, Box 1852, Saratoga, CA 95070.

The **JVC Jazz Festival New York** will run 6/24-7/3 at Carnegie, Avery Fisher, Town, and Kaufman Halls. The fest will pay tribute to Billie Holiday, Buddy Rich, and Louie Armstrong; reunite the Mingus Big Band, and present the Gil Evans Orchestra conducted by his son Miles. Other special programs include a jazz transcription of *Porgy And Bess* by the Jim Cullum Jazz Band and an evening of piano trios with Ahmad Jamal, Michel Petrucciani, and Michel Camilo. For a brochure write JVC Jazz Festival New York, Box 1169 Ansonia Station, New York City 10023.

The first **Richmond, VA International Festival of Music** runs 7/3-22 with both free and ticketed events at sites throughout the city. Besides performances by the Dirty Dozen Brass band, Al Hirt, Alvin Batiste, Ellis Marsalis, and Paquito D'Rivera, the festival will include classical, gospel, rock, and country groups. Details:

Downtown Presents, 550 E. Marshall St., Richmond, VA 23219.

The **Newport Jazz Festival** returns to the Saratoga Performing Arts Center 7/2-3 with performances by Lionel Hampton, Kenny G, Jimmy Smith, Miles Davis, Mel Torme, the Gadd Gang, Celia Cruz and Tito Puente, and Carlos Santana and Wayne Shorter. For more info: (518) 584-9330.

The **Nugget Jazz Festival**, 7/1-4 at John Ascuaga's Nugget Hotel-Casino in Reno, will feature Igor's Cowboy Jazz Band, the Hot Frogs Jumping Jazz Band, and the Nightblooming Jazzmen playing dixieland, swing, and blues. For reservations call (800) 843-2427.

The **Mt. Hood Festival of Jazz** will run 8/5-7 at the Mt. Hood Community College in Gresham, OR featuring Stan Getz, J. J. Johnson, Gene Harris, Grover Washington Jr., the Modern Jazz Quartet, and Ella Fitzgerald. For details, call (503) 666-3810.

The 10th Annual **Chicago Jazz Festival**, to be held 8/31-9/4 in Grant Park, will celebrate Chicago jazz with natives Joe Williams, Herbie Hancock, Andrew Hill, Clifford Jordan, Dorothy Donegan, Johnny Griffin, Art Hodes, Eddie Harris, Ira Sullivan, and the Art Ensemble of Chicago; a recreation of the historic Civic Opera House concert featuring Stan Getz and J. J. Johnson; special afternoon stages dedicated to Louis Armstrong and Benny Goodman; plus a series of Gene Ammons Memorial Tenor Battles, and much more. For details call (312) 744-3370.

The 12th Annual **Russian River Jazz Festival**, 9/10-11, at Midway Beach in Guerneville, CA, will feature Sonny Rollins, Angela Bofill, Freddie Hubbard, Wynton Marsalis, David Benoit, Richie Cole, and Sarah Vaughan. For more info write the Russian River Jazz Festival, Box 763, Guerneville, CA 95446.

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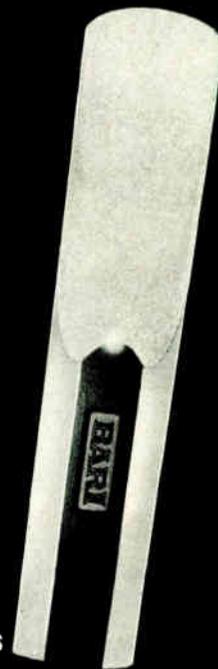


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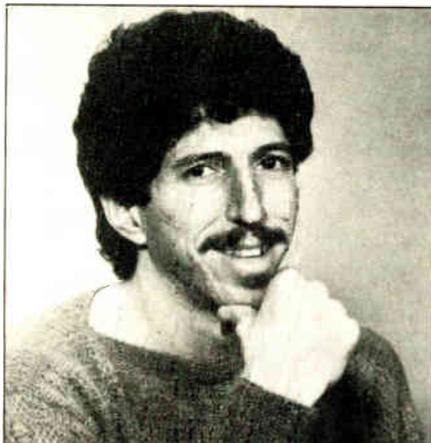
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BOB MINTZER

"He threatened me," said Bob Mintzer remembering Buddy Rich. "He heard that I was a writer. I could write a tune but I'd never done any arranging." Mintzer was sax-sectioning with Rich in the mid-'70s. "He said, 'Write something for me or I'll kill you!' I freaked! I ran to a piano and started—and it was the shock of my life. It sounded good!" Rich recorded several Mintzer originals on the album *Buddy Rich Plays And Plays*. It was just the beginning.

Mintzer himself now fronts an orchestra featuring many of the best players around—among others, trumpeter Randy Brecker, drummer Peter Erskine, pianist Don Grolnick, and, on tenor sax, the bandleader. "I do all the writing," Mintzer said. "It's my signature. If others were writing, the band would lose some of that identity I've determined by writing for it." They've now recorded three compact discs for DMP, all featuring Mintzer's writing: *Incredible Journey* (CD-451), *Camouflage* (CD-456), and the newest, *Spectrum* (CD-461).

Mintzer, in effect, learned writing by writing—especially after being threatened into writing. "I was able to write because I was able to hear. I'd sit there in Buddy's band and hear the sound. If you have good ears, you can approximate the range and the sound of the instruments in a band. I just took a



stab and, in a way, it was the best writing I've ever done because it was totally untainted by anything. It was my virgin impression of what a big band might be able to do."

Eventually he played and/or wrote for others, often coincidentally for bandleading drummers: Art Blakey (though he never joined the Jazz Messengers), Louis Bellson, and Mel Lewis. When called upon by friends at Seventh Avenue South to organize a big band featuring some of the club's regulars—David Sanborn, the Brecker brothers, Erskine, and Grolnick—he was hesitant at first. "It seemed like too big an undertaking," Mintzer said. "I took some tunes I'd written for Mel Lewis and wrote a couple of new tunes. I

called anybody I'd appreciated playing with—mostly friends, great musicians in New York—and we played. There was an overwhelming response. We did an album for CBS/Sony and played the club. Tom Jung from DMP wandered in one night and offered us a recording situation."

Mintzer's band was sensational last year playing a one-nighter (what Mintzer called "our extended European hour") at Jazzfest Berlin. And, among other gigs, they played the Vanguard when Mel Lewis was away. They'll return to the Vanguard again this summer and hope to play more. "There are jobs out there," Mintzer said. "It's just a question of getting the notoriety."

Spectrum features a small band along with the big band and a piece for solo saxophone. "I'm writing more solo saxophone stuff. I've written an orchestral piece and some chamber music and I want to write more of that, do some stuff without drums. I try to use my various influences and come up with some stuff that's fresh and serves as a vehicle for my playing."

When he's not writing he's playing all around—in New York studios, in clinics and schools that have bought Mintzer's music (published by Kendor), in the Broadway pits, with pop stars, with the New York Philharmonic, with whomever. "I'm pretty quick at jumping into a new situation. I'm accustomed to jumping in and playing it like I know it. This is what I pride myself on doing," said Bob Mintzer. "I mostly play jazz, I'm happy to say."

—michael bourne

BELA FLECK

Nothing unusual about a teenager woodshedding with a stack of Charlie Parker records or hearing Return To Forever and visualizing playing that music. Not unless your name is Bela Fleck (after Bartok) and you attend the High School of Music and Art in Manhattan.

Five-time winner of the Banjo Award in *Frets* Magazine's Readers Poll and called "the Thelonious Monk of the banjo" by no less an authority than *Country Music* magazine, Fleck plays country rock originals, Motown tunes, and reggae rhythms with the New Grass Revival. He feels right at home playing traditional bluegrass on the Nashville sessions of Loretta Lynn, the Statler Brothers, and Randy Travis and Irish music with members of DeDanann and Moving Hearts. And jazzy, improvisational tunes can be found on his own albums.

"I thought Return To Forever was a great band, but mostly I wanted to play like Chick Corea. I could look up and down the banjo neck and everything was there that you needed to play the notes, but no one had come up with the technique to play it," explains Fleck. "I started working on things most musicians work out on for most instruments: like working on scales, finding a way to play the chords. There was nothing remarkable about the things I did except that

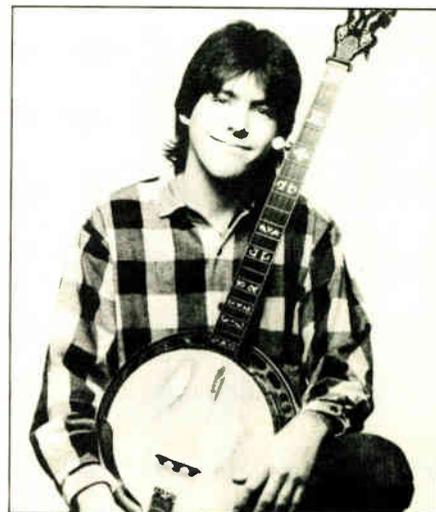
they were on the banjo."

Fleck started playing at 15, and carried his banjo to school to get in seven hours of practice a day. "I wasn't interested at all in the countryness of it, I just thought the sound of the instrument was really amazing. It took a long time to develop a sense of how special the music itself was. Bluegrass sounded pretty weird especially the singing."

"I started backwards, trying to sound as modern and as inventive as I could from the very beginning. Eventually I discovered Earl Scruggs and found out there is something wonderful about simplicity. Listening to him completely transformed my playing from a scattered to a much more solid approach so that I was able to refine some of those elements I had been working on."

While he experiments with his banjo's set up (the tautness of the head, thickness of the bridge, angle of the tail piece, string height) to get a deeper, richer sound instead of the piercing, bright tone that generally characterizes bluegrass banjo, he generally sticks to open-G tuning and the three-finger picking style attributed to Scruggs.

"The banjo is sort of difficult because of its very short sustain. When you pluck a note it is gone very quickly. So most banjo playing is done very fast with the notes on the very front edge of the beat which creates a rippling sort of sound that's really cool. But it creates a lot of problems in trying to play jazz or any kind of music that doesn't have to be lightning fast all the time. I looked at sustain as a problem



JIM MCGUIRE

for a long time but now see it as a strength of the instrument.

"One of my next goals is to make a record that is really in the jazz idiom, that isn't just jazzy," says Fleck. Meanwhile, tunes like *Ambrose*, *Flexibility*, *Moontides*, and *Deviation* (from his various Rounder albums), and *Metric Lips*—which earned him the "Monk" moniker—from the New Grass Revival's latest album *Hold To A Dream* (Capitol 46962), pop up in the oddest places, like on jazz radio stations. . . much to Fleck's amazement.

—dave helland



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The
SONNY ROLLINS
Interview



PHIL BRAY

By Gene Kalbacher

For about three decades, Sonny Rollins has been the standard-bearer for, and sine qua non to, horn players of every persuasion. Rollins, now nearing 60, doesn't flinch a bit when he's praised for being, in the minds of many, "the world's greatest living improviser." Then again, during the two interviews from which this piece has been culled (one on a subzero January night, from the tenorman's homestead in upstate New York; the other on a spring evening, from his apartment in Lower Manhattan), he offers variants on the same self-assessment: "There are a lot of albums on which I can't stand to hear myself!"

The tenor titan who has given us *Saxophone Colossus*, *Worktime*, *Way Out West*, *The Bridge*, *Freedom Suite*, and *A Night At The Village Vanguard* is forever trying to catch up with himself; the eight-year-old New York City lad who, instead of following his parents' dictates and taking piano lessons—as his older brother and sister had—lit out for the ballfield. In the process, he earned the nickname Newk (for Brooklyn Dodger pitcher Don Newcombe) and an artistry-intensive inferiority complex, a quest for perfection that shadows him to this day. That drive to catch up—a major reason for his celebrated sabbaticals over the years, one in the late '50s, the other in the late '60s—pushes him forever onward.

On the evening of our second interview, Rollins looked pensively out the window of his 39th-floor apartment, all of Lower Manhattan looming before him, the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center just beyond his vision. Only days before he had headlined at Town Hall, a concert at which Gary Giddins of *The Village Voice* would write a week later, "Rollins played with a vivacity and amplitude so far beyond the ken of most musicians that it might shame many into another line of work."

Rollins never mentioned the show.

Gene Kalbacher: It's been interesting, since 1984's *Sunny Days*, *Starry Nights*, to hear you recording with trombone on the front line again. This combination harkens back to some of your very earliest recordings, which featured J.J. Johnson.

Sonny Rollins: Absolutely correct. J.J. was the first person to record one of my compositions, in fact, and I enjoyed the very special sound of saxophone and trombone very early in my career. It's one of my favorite sounds. I've worked with Jimmy Cleveland and Grachan Moncur, but even more to the point than the sound of the two instruments together is the empathy and simpatico which has developed now between Clifton [Anderson] and myself; it's becoming so important to the way everything is sounding now. There's a very fine rapport, which is what we've been aiming for all along.

GK: This is an unfair question because you've had so many fine groups in your career. Has this band crystallized faster, or perhaps evolved more naturally, than some of your earlier bands?

SR: The first critically acclaimed record I did with this group was *Sunny Days*, *Starry Nights*. . . . We've had some good engagements, which have propelled the process very nicely. It's important to have favorable working conditions; you can't spend all your time in the rehearsal studio.

GK: Some of your landmark recordings over the years have been trio dates made without a chordal instrument; other notable sessions have included piano or guitar. Some of your recent live performances, however, have included both guitar and keyboards. Since your pianoless sessions have, in my estimation, forced you to unleash the full range of your harmonic imagination, does performing with both piano and guitar make it easier for you to do

less harmonically? And, if so, must you overcompensate for that eventuality?

SR: One of the good things about Bobby Broome, who has played with us when we add guitar, is that he's very sensitive and he's a very sparse player; he leaves a lot of room, and he doesn't get in the way, and he doesn't carry the accompaniment to any large degree in any direction. With a player like Bobby, the configuration of piano and guitar doesn't get in my way or lead me, as it might seem; they play as little as possible in accompanying me. Basically, I still feel I enjoy the freedom I have when I've played without these instruments.

GK: *Freedom*, yes, and also pressure. You seemed to relish making things difficult for yourself, by having no chordal anchor to keep you afloat.

SR: Sure. The type of music we're playing is very risk-taking. I'm not a musician that can go to a job and do the same routine every night. Even though I might play certain songs—or a repertoire of certain songs—every night, each of those songs is going to be played differently; they're *recomposed* each time. It's one thing to have a lot of arranged-type band licks around you, which is OK; I'm not putting it down. It's something that became popular maybe in the '70s, and certainly in the '80s. But that's not where I'm coming from—I'm coming from straight improvisation, extemporaneous creativity, all of these things happening right on the spot.

GK: In recent years, you've employed young musicians for your bands and recordings, in much the same way that you were probably the youngest musician on your earliest sessions. Besides the youthful energy you can tap from young players, what other advantages do they offer?

SR: The energy thing is very important. A lot of the players of my time are not around anymore. [At my age] you have a band of your own, you really don't want to be a sideman in someone else's band. [My peers] are old enough that they want to have their own groups. So I *had* to get younger guys, which was OK. The energy comes from the fact that the guys are younger, they're not jaded, they're willing to go out on the road. I'm usually a very energetic player myself, even though I'm older than the other guys in the band. I'm not looking to get energy from them. The energy I want from them is the energy that they're able to accept new things, travel, and just learn about the musician's life from me.

GK: If you were an aspiring musician today, given your same musical aptitude and work ethic, do you think you'd have an easier or harder time making a mark than you did as a teenager in the late '40s?

SR: I think maybe I would have an easier time [today], but it's a very speculative question. I can't be sure. The opportunities today seem to be more numerous. You've got so many schools, colleges teaching jazz; you've got more radio stations and media exposure. I think I'd probably be able to get along faster. Back when I began playing with all these great guys, it was really a small group of people that dug jazz.

GK: In jam sessions and cutting contests back then, the onus was on the individual to prove himself. One didn't get an opportunity to gig or make a record until he had earned it.

SR: That's true. Perhaps the school of hard knocks is the best school in the long run. But if I had a kid, or a chance to live my life over again, I would still want to be availed of the best schools and everything.

GK: Although you and John Coltrane only recorded together once

[Tenor Madness, with Miles Davis' rhythm section, in 1956], you were good friends. Had Trane lived, what sort of music do you suppose he'd be making today?

SR: [laughs] Gee, I have no idea. I know some of his later music was going more, maybe, into abstract music. So maybe he'd be playing something very abstract, maybe something like east Indian music, music from southern India. That southern Indian music is very complicated and very—what's the word?—dense.

GK: You yourself began exploring Indian music not long after Coltrane died.

SR: I went to India in 1968, actually. I was interested in Indian music before I went there . . . but I went there really to study yoga.

GK: One could teach a course in modern jazz using only your albums as a sideman and leader. Most of the giants of the period can be heard on those recordings: Coleman Hawkins, Max Roach, Clifford Brown, Thelonious Monk, Miles Davis, Bud Powell, Charlie Parker, and on and on. Is there anyone you really wanted to record with but never did?

SR: Sure. I wanted to play with Duke Ellington some time, and I never did. Who else? I would like to have recorded with Lester Young, although I played with Lester [live]. But I never played with Duke.

GK: At various points in your career, have the critical or popular successes you've achieved coincided with your own personal assessments of artistic breakthroughs?

SR: No, no. I often felt that the critics were not judging me properly, for a lot of reasons; I thought I wasn't really being understood.

GK: Are you often surprised that critics and listeners like a particular record of yours more, or less, than you do?

SR: Quite a bit. There are a lot of records I don't even listen to, because I can't stand to listen to myself.

GK: Such as?

SR: More recently, there's *G-Man*. I haven't listened to that since I mixed it. I wasn't doing what I wanted to do exactly. That was part of a film [Robert Mугge's *Saxophone Colossus*]. It was a very painful experience for me to watch that because I'd jumped off the stage and broke my heel in that film; I had to walk out of the screening of that film. That record has been very well received, I think, but I can't listen to it.

GK: What about *The Solo Album* [a live recording of his solo, unaccompanied concert in the Sculpture Garden of the Museum of Modern Art in New York City in July, 1985]?

SR: I have listened to it, but there's so much that I am displeased with. In fact, I want to do another solo album.

GK: Wait a minute! You've been quoted as saying—you've sworn!—that you'd never do another one.

SR: I've done a lot of solo playing, and that album, whatever its faults or merits, did not in my estimation catch me when I'm really doing it. No, I don't want to do another one, but . . . to make a record I can live with, I've considered doing another one.

GK: You may not like *The Solo Album*, but some consider it a crowning achievement in your career, a daring leap into the breach. When had you played solo before? Were you referring to your penchant for long solos and cadenzas during segments of your group gigs?

SR: No. I did a solo concert in Berkeley, California one year. I think it might've been 1966. It wasn't my concert completely; there were three or four groups on the bill, and I had a segment. In addition, I also played solo on *The Johnny Carson Show* once, when Bill Cosby was the MC. And, in India once, I

gave an unaccompanied performance for the people at the ashram where I was staying.

GK: In retrospect, was the *Sculpture Garden* concert more or less challenging, more or less satisfying, than you had anticipated?

SR: For that presentation, I had several options. I had considered sitting down and playing the whole thing; I had some [sheet] music and themes I'd sketched out, but I didn't refer to them. Or I figured I might stand up and play while I walked around, and that's what I ended up doing. The excitement in the air led to my being more forceful and walking around.

GK: Should you decide to do another completely solo performance, would you prepare differently?

SR: I may. I've always been a great admirer of Andrés Segovia, and I've always marvelled at the way he can sit down on the stage, one guy with a guitar, and fill the house and play. So the idea of sitting down and playing appeals to me. But that I would probably have to do in a concert hall.

GK: I'm told that, as a compositional aid, Miles Davis tapes every one of his concerts, not necessarily for release purposes but to listen back to the solos—his and his bandmates'—from which he extracts ideas and lines he then uses for heads to new tunes. Do you use that method or perhaps a similar one?

SR: No, I have to be quite frank, I don't do that. Probably the reason I don't is because I hate listening back to myself. I really think it's a defect at times, because . . . I think it could be beneficial. Every musician I know always has the earplugs in their ears, and they're listening to music 24 hours a day. In fact, I don't like to listen to music that much. I'm so involved in my own writing and working and practicing. As for listening to music, I'm very deficient. I'm thinking music all the time, and when I'm not involved in music, I seek out other diversions completely.

GK: For composing, what are your preferred methods and instruments?

SR: I very often hit upon things when I'm practicing. A lot of figures and motifs come to me when I'm practicing my horn. A lot of things come to me just when I'm walking down the street. I shouldn't say *a lot* because getting good ideas is not that easy; you have to search for them like looking for gold. Also, if I really sit down at the piano, I can get something going. Some compositions of mine have been done strictly from the piano, without the saxophone around.

GK: Are any of your new tunes from *Dancing In The Dark* derived from the piano?

SR: Maybe part of the ballad *Promise*. The other one, *O.T.Y.O.G.*—no, not that one.

GK: What does *O.T.Y.O.G.* stand for, by the way?

SR: Oh Thank You, Oh God. You're the first one I've told that to. It's just something I say to myself. It's very personal, a prayer.

GK: The new tune *Allison*, which appears twice [the second time on CD only], sounds instantly familiar to me. Had you ever recorded that before?

SR: No.

GK: I could swear I've heard that before.

SR: Every tune is familiar in that sections of it may remind you of other tunes.

GK: It didn't remind me of any particular tune, but of many tunes.

SR: That's sort of what composers try to do. They try to do something original. Yet when people hear it, they relate to it immediately, like it's something you know already, or you should



PHIL BRAY

SONNY ROLLINS' EQUIPMENT

Sonny Rollins plays a Selmer Mark VI tenor saxophone. On occasion, he also plays a Selmer soprano. He currently favors Rico Royal reeds, but for him the quest for the right reed is never-ending. "Prior to Rico Royal," he explains, "I was using La Voz sometimes. Sometimes companies put out reeds, and then they stop. There was a Carl Fischer reed, a very good reed, but they don't make them anymore. I would use any reed that works. The problem is, I sometimes have to buy a box of reeds—I think there's 10 in a box—to find one I can play. Sometimes I'll get maybe two good reeds out of three boxes."

SONNY ROLLINS SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

DANCING IN THE DARK—Milestone 9155	Contemporary 7564
G-MAN—Milestone 9150	THE BRIDGE—RCA AFL-1-0859
THE SOLO ALBUM—Milestone 9137	EAST BROADWAY RUN DOWN—Impulse 9191
SUNNY DAYS, STARRY NIGHTS—Milestone 9122	GREEN DOLPHIN STREET—Quintessence 25181
REEL LIFE—Milestone 9108	NEWK'S TIME—Blue Note 84001
NO PROBLEM—Milestone 9104	ON IMPULSE—Impulse 91
LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT—Milestone 9098	PURE GOLD—RCA ANL-1-2809
DON'T ASK—Milestone 9090	THERE WILL NEVER BE ANOTHER YOU—Impulse IA-9349
DON'T STOP THE CARNIVAL—Milestone 55005	FREEDOM SUITE PLUS—Milestone 47007
EASY LIVING—Milestone 9080	A NIGHT AT THE VILLAGE VANGUARD—Blue Note 81581E
HORN CULTURE—Milestone 9051	MORE FROM THE VANGUARD—Blue Note LA475-H2
NEXT ALBUM—Milestone 9042	SAXOPHONE COLOSSUS AND MORE—Prestige 24050
CUTTING EDGE—Milestone 9059	SONNY ROLLINS—Prestige 24004
NUCLEUS—Milestone 9064	TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS—Prestige 24082
THE WAY I FEEL—Milestone 9074	
GREAT MOMENTS WITH...—MCA 2-4127	
VINTAGE SESSIONS—Prestige 24096	
SONNY ROLLINS—Blue Note LA40-H2	
WAY OUT WEST—Contemporary 7530	
AND THE CONTEMPORARY LEADERS—	

know, or you maybe heard in another world.

GK: Your new calypso, *Duke Of Iron*, is a worthy successor to *St. Thomas and Don't Stop The Carnival*. What is the significance of the title?

SR: There used to be a very famous calypso singer from Trinidad named the Duke of Iron. He was really hot. He was around during the '30s, maybe even the '20s. He looked a lot like [bassist] Stanley Clarke [laughs]. . . . These rhythms are very intricate, and this song is a little bit different from some of the other ones I've played. But I had an excellent drummer, [Marvin Smitty Smith, and he got the proper feeling.

GK: In a similar vein, it's interesting how you inject another island rhythm, reggae, into the familiar I'll String Along With You.

SR: Calypso and reggae are both very socially-conscious. That was one of my favorite standards for a long time, one that we hadn't really played [live].

GK: How dangerous is it to take a song like that out of its original context?

SR: It works because I'm very true to the song, I love the song, and I'm playing it from my heart. And the rhythm falls well with it. As long as you're true to everything you're doing, those kinds of weird conglomerations can work.

GK: You're famous for that, of course. *Wagon Wheels, Toot, Toot, Tootsie, There's No Business Like Show Business*—you take corny, hoary tunes no one else would touch and somehow bring out something extra.

SR: It's precisely because I love the songs. I'm not trying to parody them in any way. It begins with an appreciation and a love of the material for what it is, and then I'm putting my interpretation to it.

GK: It's no secret that you're not entirely comfortable in the recording studio. Now that you've made several records with the nucleus of Mark Soskin and Clifton Anderson, are you coming to grips with the increased possibilities, as well as the inherent limitations, of the studio?

SR: [The increased familiarity with the band] is part of it. We're using a system—it's a little more expensive—where we let the tape roll, and we don't mark off every take as being a separate take. Sometimes when we're rehearsing, we roll the tape. This way we get a less studied and more natural effect. We started doing it this way for the *Sunny Days, Starry Nights* record. Sometimes the guys forget they're being recorded; sometimes I forget we're being recorded.

GK: Have you always been ill at ease in the recording studio, dating back to your work in the late '40s as a sideman to Bud Powell and Fats Navarro?

SR: No, I wasn't uncomfortable. Even on the early records I made with J.J. [Johnson] and the Miles recordings in the early '50s, I was comfortable. I'd have to trace when it happened. Plus, we had a short amount of time. In those days we were making 78s, so we didn't have the luxury of doing a lot of takes. Maybe you'd do two takes; three takes were uncompletely unknown [laughs]. Probably the fact that you could do more takes in later years might have made me feel, "Gee, let me keep going, and try to get it perfect."

GK: Might your discomfort also have stemmed from the fact that, by the mid-'50s, you'd achieved a measure of acclaim, and greater demands were placed on you? Thus, you placed greater demands—and pressure—on yourself?

SR: Yeah. Exactly. There was more pressure, and I felt I had to live up to somebody's idea of what I should be. I was trying to be perfect. I began to indulge myself. One of my indulgences is a quest for perfection, and this can go on and on forever. db

BILL COSBY



LOVES JAZZ!

By Michael Bourne

A Conversation With Bill Cosby

He's the most popular entertainer in America, it's been said of comedian Bill Cosby. He's the star of the NBC sitcom, *The Cosby Show*, that again last season was #1 in the ratings. He's written best-selling books (*Fatherhood* and *Time Flies*, among others) and sold countless albums, from his early '60s routine *Noah And The Lord* through last year's *Those Of You With Or Without Children, You'll Understand*. He's sold out concerts all over America—never by telling jokes so much as by telling the truth, especially on his insightful musings about family life. He's starred in movies (*Uptown Saturday Night* and *Let's Do It Again*, among others) and on tv since his early '60s breakthrough with *I Spy*. And what face nowadays is as familiar as Cosby's? He's in magazines and newspapers, on billboards and all over tv, selling, it sometimes seems, everything—from Coca-Cola and E.F. Hutton to Kodak and Jello.

It also might be said that there's no greater advocate for jazz than Bill Cosby. He's the favorite MC of the Playboy Jazz Festival every year in Hollywood, and whenever he's hosted *The Tonight Show* he's featured jazz musicians. Cosby's own show always features jazz on the soundtrack, and now he's recorded several new jazz projects. "He's definitely one of the best promoters of jazz musicians who's come along the last 30-40 years," said Cosby's long-time musical associate Stu Gardner. "He loves all the jazz musicians, from the old to the new." And they love Bill Cosby. This was especially evident in the spring when Lionel Hampton was honored at Town Hall in New York with an all-star birthday tribute. Cosby walked on with the cake. Cosby stayed and played the drums with Hamp; a rocking blues that delighted everyone.

We talked about jazz (and then some) at Cosby's townhouse in Manhattan. . . .

Michael Bourne: It's obvious you have a great love for this music.

Bill Cosby: When I was a kid, around 13 or 14, I used to stand outside the Blue Note in Philadelphia en route to playing some ball. This was at matinees, four in the afternoon. I'd see these musicians greet each other, and they were the first people, outside my family, I saw hug. It

seemed like everything they said to each other was either hilarious or warm and wonderful; all smiles. It always seemed that these people enjoyed what they were doing.

MB: Who was around then in Philly?

BC: I heard a lot of local guys, like C Sharpe. I came up with Archie Shepp, Reggie Workman, Spanky DeBrest, Lex Humphries, Lee Morgan, Benny Golson.

Another thing about the music was that in the '40s, the '50's, even into the early '60s, jazz was music you could dance to, even Charlie Parker, and no matter how fast. We used to have these dances when I lived in the projects every Wednesday night. It cost something like 8¢. I was about 13 or 14. We had the old 78s. Earl Bostic, Louis Jordan, Sonny Till and the Orioles, and you'd hear Charlie Parker.

At that time there was definitely a separation in the cultures, the different ethnic groups. If I took a 78 of Parker or Thelonious or Miles or Lester Young—if it was a mixed party, mixed races—the only people who could dance to it would be the black people. There was a dance called the Strand. You never let go of your partner. You walked the floor. There was a dance called the Bop that you did in off-time. If they played *Cherokee*, no matter how fast, you danced off-time. You made a big mistake if you started with *Cherokee* on-time. You couldn't make it. By the 12th bar you realized you were wrong.

That music was a dance music. And then there was the association of jazz being the music of the hip people. The big thing was to associate dating with what was the hip music. If you were into jazz, you took your hippest albums, you dressed up, and you'd visit the girl you were dating with your jams! The girls were hip, and it was thought of as an intellectual endeavor as well to bring your latest Miles or Max Roach, Lester Young, the MJQ, Jimmy Giuffre.

And the way I bought albums—there was no need for a review. I just waited for somebody's latest. And when someone said it was a new star, like when Roland Kirk came on, the dude was a hit immediately.

MB: You started playing yourself, the drums.

BC: Yeah, and I enjoyed it, but I thought the stuff I was doing was right on the button and everybody kept telling me I had

this unorthodox way of playing.

MB: You were in the pocket the other night with Hamp.

BC: Yeah, but Hamp's got a funny set of drums.

MB: No sock cymbals.

BC: Yeah, so you find your leg moving where there isn't anything.

I think one of the most physically damaging groups to play with is an organ trio. I played with Jimmy Smith at a little bar two blocks down the street from me. Donald Bailey got sick one weekend. I made \$7 a night. I was 17 and Jimmy heard about me. Donald's drums were there. I'd never seen a set-up like that. Donald had a bass pedal with a spring on it that if you mashed it right you could do a bass drum roll. But it could get away from you. It would be like sitting in a car and not knowing someone tripled everything. So you fire it up and put it in first, or even worse, put it in reverse, and without knowing it you're through everything, you've torn up everything. It took me about a set to get used to the bass pedal. You'd hit that thing and get six or seven kicks when you wanted one—and Lord help you if you wanted two because the pedal went up your pants leg. I ripped my pants because the pedal was still coming back when I was going forward. I had to wear a bicycle clip. And then Donald played with what I call parade sticks, these thick sticks. Jimmy didn't try *The Champ* after the first eight bars I played with him. I just couldn't keep it up.

MB: Were you sectioning around the Philly scene?

BC: Not really. I played with two bands. I sat in with organ trios and I was fortunate enough to get a job with Charlie Chissom and the Philadelphians. That was my first big legitimate gig. This was just after I got out of the service in the '60s. I was going to Temple U. at the time. It was a quintet. We played all of the latest hits, *Señor Blues*, *Four*, whatever was the latest. But the group played softer than the hard-driving Art Blakey or what Miles was doing. That's what I wanted to do. My whole thing was to drive and kick and push, but all I may have been was just loud.

MB: Tell me the Sonny Stitt story.

BC: I thought I was ready. I had these

STU GARDNER: MUSIC DIRECTOR

"I am Badfoot Brown," said Stu Gardner, music director of *The Cosby Show* and many another Cosby project. "Cosby is Bunions Bradford." Together as Badfoot and Bunions they once fronted the Funeral Parlor Marching Band on record and in concert, once even at Newport. Together as friends through the years Gardner and Cosby have jazzfully energized whatever Cosby was comedically up to.

"We're partners," Gardner said. "I'm the music director for all of Cosby's stuff, including *The Cosby Show* and *A Different World* [the Cosby sitcom spin-off], most of his albums, his projects. It's over 25 years now."

They first became friends in the latter '50s. "We met in Virginia," Gardner said. "He was in the Navy and I was playing a club in Richmond. He came in and sat in on drums." Eventually they both moved to New York. "I kept running into Cosby at the Improvisation, the comedy club." Gardner moved to California about the time Cosby was breaking through with the tv series *I Spy*. "I picked up the newspaper and it said Bill Cosby was getting a tv show, his first starring role. So one day I got in my car and drove to L.A. and we've been together ever since."

Cosby worked for a while with Quincy Jones, but Gardner became a musical constant in Cosby's performing life. "I did a lot of the music on his other shows," Gardner said, "and I've done other projects, working with bands, making records. I was in Hollywood for 22 years. I worked with a lot of great actors and musicians, mostly in movies and tv. I did *Faces* with John Cassavetes. I participated with Johnny Mandel on *Point Blank* with Lee Marvin. I did a thing with Dean Martin called *Mr. Rico*. And also for

16 years, when I wasn't working with Cosby, I was Rosey Grier's music director. He had a stage show. We'd do the Playboy clubs and political things with Ed Muskie and Bobby Kennedy. I do some other things—a movie of the week, a lot of movie scoring—but most of what I do is connected with Cosby. I don't have to stray far to find work."

Gardner is responsible for the Cosby show's soundtrack—usually inspired by the star. "We've had such a communicational relationship the last 20-30 years that we just understand each other," Gardner said. "Cosby will get an idea for a script or he'll have a concept around a tune. I'll receive a videocassette and what'll happen then is Art Lisi does all the horn arrangements and orchestrations and basically I write most of the music. I'll write maybe 90 percent in collaboration with Cosby and what he'd like to have. I love his input. I've never had any reason to doubt anything he's said because it always works."

One musical tradition on the show is that each season the opening theme is re-created with a new groove. "That was Cosby's idea. Basically he's always believed a new season requires a new concept. It's a tremendous challenge for me. I have to keep the same melody but we'll come up with an idea we haven't used before or we'll create a totally new concept." While the first season's theme was straightforward with a touch of funk, the second season's theme was latinized. "We were very close to Willie Bobo and the salsa theme was dedicated to Bobo." Bobby McFerrin vocalized the third season's theme, and Gardner won't tell what's next—except that "It'll be new!"

Not all the music is incidental. It often happens that classic jazz and blues recordings resound on the soundtrack and some-

times even have to do with the plots. The Huxtables once wrangled about a Jimmy Scott album, and Big Maybelle singing *Candy* became popular again after one of Cosby's episodes. "Cosby will come up with these records he wants. Our job is to find them and if they're old or they can't be recorded we'll duplicate them."

Some of the greats of jazz have performed (as both actors and musicians) on the show, in particular Dizzy Gillespie and Joe Williams. Gardner also features jazz stars guesting on the soundtrack. Grover Washington Jr. headlined *A House Full Of Love* (Columbia 40270), the first release of Gardner's music from the show. *Total Happiness* (Columbia 40704), the follow-up, spotlighted Branford Marsalis, Dave Valentin, Herbie Hancock, Roy Ayers, and Stanley Jordan, among others.

"I have a group of very loyal musicians," Gardner said. "They'll set aside the time, although we don't always know when a session is coming up. Basically I have my bass player, Paul Adamy. Bob Gallo on guitar. My drummer is usually Joe Ham but my drummers and keyboard players vary. I'll use Ndugu on drums. Wah Wah Watson on guitar. On sax I'll have Bob Malach, who's one of the greatest, or Ben Russell, also Craig Handy. On percussion I'll use Gaynell Colburn." Harold Vick and Lockjaw Davis played some of the last music they recorded on Gardner/Cosby projects.

They're both especially excited about the new recordings they expect to be released from Philly International this year. One album is a jazz session with the likes of John Scofield and Sonny Sharrock on guitars, Harold Mabern or Don Pullen at the piano, bassist Mark Egan, Al Foster or Jack DeJohnette at the drums. And the other album

drumsticks with painted blue tips. I decided to go down to the Showboat and sit in, a Saturday matinee. Any place where you sit in, there's about 75 drummers, 6,000 tenor players, four trombones, maybe about 60 trumpets, 32 piano players, and one bass player. There was a line. This was Philly and at that time Philadelphia had a reputation. If you wanted to find musicians, go to Philadelphia.

All the local guys, they're all cooking. Guys are trading off, some I knew about, some I didn't know, drummers going up. So after about the second hour I decided I'd go up and play. I'd watched every drummer and none of them were thinking the way I was thinking. I knew I had some good stuff to show. Everything was medium tempo blues. I tapped the drummer after he'd played two numbers. There were 700 horn players and everybody's taken at least two choruses. I did my little faking of tuning the drums. I didn't know what I was doing. I was just faking with the key.

All of a sudden everybody's talking. It was Sonny Stitt. My head went like Don King's hair! I'm going to play with Sonny

Stitt! I'm thinking about all his records. I know what he plays, what he likes, know who his drummers were. I know what to do. This was going to be a *pleasure!* Sonny put his horn together and turned around and said "Look, I've been listening for seven-eight minutes. Let's play some *jazz!*" And he counted off a *Cherokee* that was so fast that I knew I'd never be able to carry it out.

I started out just driving and I knew that if I just played the straight form I could carry it out, but people want to hear what the drummer does. You've got to do something with your left hand and bass foot, but I knew that if I tried something I was done for. But you have to shape up or ship out, so I made a single stroke with the left hand—and the meter went. I caught up. I tried to make it look hip, like I meant to do it. And then I did a fill and came back on the "and" which should have been on the "one" and Stitt turned around.

I tried to make it look hip again. I started with the sock cymbal. I did some more fills I thought would be hip and then I went back to driving—and my right arm started to freeze up, rigor mortis started to set in, and the stick started to slip.

Thank goodness Mickey Roker came up. I heard "dig-de-dig-de-dig" and I knew it wasn't me. I got up and Mickey sat down and I took my little sticks with the blue tips and I walked off the stage as smooth as I could.

MB: You still play once in a while.

BC: One of the great stories. John Lewis, the drummer, had a club in Greenwich Village. John kept saying to come down. So one night I walked in. I don't remember the musicians. John said to the 10 or 15 customers, "We have a celebrity, a man I know who plays and loves the music." I'd stopped playing by then, but I went down and got behind the drums. Philly Joe Jones walked in as I started playing. I was very fortunate. Everything I wanted to do that I could do, I did. I played well. I very proudly walked off and sat down with Philly—and Philly said, "You know, if you had about three months with me, I could clean up all that stuff for you." It wasn't a put-down. He was telling the truth. I said to myself I must not have played as well as I thought, but that was a great moment.

MB: When you first became a working comedian was the time when jazz and

is . . . different.

"Basically the whole idea is the music Cosby grew up with and loves incorporated with some of the music I grew up with and love. It's R-R-J—Rap-Rock-Jazz. It's totally different, a new concept I guarantee the public will love. Basically it's a certain type of rap with the hard rhythmic feel of rock and excellent musicians playing jazz lines. It's designed for fun. It's nothing but a party. Mother will be playing it and the kids will come in, or the kids will be playing it and father will listen. Cosby's always trying to find something for the entire family."

What it sounds like is a criss-cross of radio signals as if a funk station is bleeding into a jazz station. "It's like the Jazz Messengers with Kurtis Blow or the Fat Boys," Gardner said. "It's basically Cosby's idea and I'm having a ball with it." Several numbers have a saxophone (Craig Handy or Ben Russell) blowing out from a chatter of voices and effects while the backbeat is solid and from time to time there's this quite infectious synthesized "Ooga-Ooga." "We have three signatures: glass breaking, water falling, and Ooga-Ooga. We love Ooga-Ooga. It's a sound kids will identify. We drive you nuts with Ooga-Ooga. We'll get to the point where if we play a normal tune you'll be looking for Ooga-Ooga."

Though he's always enjoyed working with Bill Cosby, Stu Gardner nowadays is enjoying all the more Ooga-Ooga and then some. "We've always had fun but this is another level. It's higher. As we get older we learn more and we look for new things. We keep finding things to have fun with, really enjoying life. Basically that's all it is. Cosby inspires me and I evidently inspire him. We keep growing. We keep laughing."

—michael bourne

comedy were happening together at clubs and in concerts. I remember the first time I saw you. I'd never heard of you. This was just before your first record with Noah and you were the opening act for Nancy Wilson in St. Louis.

BC: When I came in you worked either with the folk singers or the jazz musicians. Comedians opened for everybody. The Village Vanguard had given a great deal of space and time to the new hip comedians, and then you had the Village Gate. You'd have a potpourri of acts, like Nina Simone and Mongo Santamaria with new comedian Flip Wilson.

I came out of the coffee houses working with folk singers and blues singers. And the whole idea for me was to incorporate a jazz feeling with what I was doing. If you want to talk about jazz and what people do, I think Jonathan Winters, even if he doesn't care for jazz, worked like a jazz musician. And one of the most important guys was Lord Buckley, although I never heard Lord Buckley until I'd already written *Noah* and some other stuff.

What a club like the Gaslight in Greenwich Village allowed me to do was—I'd have a head arrangement and I could

play in and around and on top of it, extend it. I could have an introduction that was three-four minutes just with a thought.

MB: *Blowing on comedic changes.*

BC: Absolutely. And I didn't have to have an ending for a piece or a punchline as much as a segue into another piece. And people started to say that even if he does the same piece it isn't the same. Oddly enough, I got rid of pieces very much the same way musicians do. If I can't find any more to do with a piece, I let it go.

MB: *Only sometimes people expect a favorite piece, like Poinciana from Ahmad Jamal.*

BC: Yeah, sometimes you have to make a decision as a performer whether a piece becomes a prop or not. And a prop is something I've never really enjoyed having to lean on. I always feel that I am the funny person, that my instrument is my brain, my voice, and so forth. If you have a piece that becomes hilarious enough that people love it, the piece becomes stronger than the performer. This was something I learned quite early—that you perfect these pieces, then push them out—so that you become the funny person. It's not the piece that's what you are. So the only dissatisfaction that comes is you'll have some people who'll say, "I'd love to see you do *Noah*," and I just graciously tell them that I haven't done it and don't know it but that the same guy who wrote *Noah* and told you about Fat Albert is going to perform for you.

MB: *When you became successful enough to host The Tonight Show and have some say about the guests, you presented some of the first hard-core jazz on the show. Johnny Carson would have Buddy Rich or Louis Bellson but I remember with you it was Tony Williams, the MJQ, Dizzy, and the phenomenal night Sonny Rollins played solo. That must have flabbergasted most of the audience.*

BC: It flabbergasted the producer! But he'd say, "If that's what Bill wants, okay"—and that's kind of sad.

MB: *Was it a struggle to have these musicians on The Tonight Show?*

BC: Yes, but not a struggle when I was on. They'd say, "Whatever Bill wants." But if I called and said they should have Ahmad Jamal on the program, they'd say, "We'll wait for you." I think it's just John's taste in jazz. John really loves and appreciates Joe Williams and, let's say, the Ellington and Basie and Errol Garner type of jazz.

I remember I had Wynton Marsalis and his group. That was a struggle to have the group. This was when Wynton was just away from Art Blakey maybe a year. I don't remember all the musicians I had, but the band loved it when I was going to host. They'd all want to know who I was bringing. I had Dizzy on and they all

thanked me.

MB: *They must have loved Sonny on the show.*

BC: Oh, sure! One of the classic moments for me was with Sonny Rollins at the Village Gate. Bermuda shorts were in style then and Sonny is standing on stage in Bermuda shorts, and the whole time he was playing I was watching his kneecaps go up and down.

MB: *I remember the night you and Johnny both played drums with the Charlie Watts band. You were in the pocket with the back beat but Johnny was totally lost playing swing time.*

BC: John is very at home with a traditional big band. I think he'd love to be a big band drummer. But still he's into a form of jazz, he was a big supporter of Buddy Rich, and that was wonderful.

MB: *You've always featured jazz on your own shows. You worked with Quincy Jones on the first sitcom when you played the teacher. You even recorded a hit with Quincy, Hikki-Burr.*

BC: Quincy did the music on that show with whatever musicians were in town playing a club, like Shelly's Manne-Hole or the Lighthouse. Quincy called them in for a session. So for two years I did that show. On some of those sessions I've got Rahsaan, Cannonball, Ray Brown. There's a lot of history.

This is my music, it really is. It's a music you can use to score motion pictures by, even with today's big soundtracks. I think you can score a movie with a quartet. I scored *To All My Friends On Shore* with me on drums and Stu Gardner on the organ, and that was it.

MB: *You've been musically involved with Stu Gardner for 25-30 years now, especially on the new show. You've released two albums of music from the show and even featured jazz in the plots, like when the father's jazz band reunited. You've featured some classic records also. I especially remember the night when the Huxtables danced to John Coltrane.*

BC: I'd like to do more but the companies that own this music are charging astronomical prices. We would use more but if I have to pay for a minute of music what it costs me to hire a name actor it makes very little sense.

You know what Cliff's favorite television program is when he's alone? It's Jo Jones giving drum lessons. You'll hear this voice saying, "*The Drum* is . . . so forth and so on," and Cliff is watching. That's Jo Jones from one of the cassettes he made about drum history and drum lessons. I've had that on two-three times.

MB: *I've also seen WBGO [the Newark, NJ jazz station] on posters on the show. You're a great supporter of jazz radio.*

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Geri Allen

REAL-LIFE MUSIC COMES TO TOWN



LONA FOOTE

by Don Palmer

Keeping up with the Joneses isn't that bad if you hail from Detroit. After all, the Jones clan—Hank, Elvin, and the late Thad—are some of the most prominent jazz musicians who at one time called the Motor City area home. To a list that includes the likes of Ron Carter, Marcus Belgrave, Pheeroan akLaff, Dwight Andrews, Kirk Lightsey, Aretha Franklin, and Anita Baker, add pianist Geri Allen. Allen, who at the age of 31, has become one of the most talked about pianists on the New York scene, is doing her level best to make certain the Detroit tradition lives on.

As a matter of fact, Allen brought a host of her Detroit buddies to New York for a four-night stand in mid-March at the Knitting Factory—one of New York City's most adventurous new clubs that

looks like a cross between an art gallery, a coffee house, and the club car of a cross-country train. At the Factory, Allen led her octet in compositions that romped through changes in time signature and modal-funk vamps or floated dreamlike over changes that seemed like gondoliers on a ferris-wheel of Afro-Cuban clavé rhythms. Perched behind a grand piano, Allen picked out mbira and balophone lines on synthesizer or launched into tumbling yet fluid piano figures to set the mood and melody of pieces. Or like such masters as Ellington, Basie, and Monk, Allen prompted the band with spare chording or economical phrases. Occasionally, she'd pull her knees up, wrap her arms around them, and rock back and forth while listening to the interplay between sections, the essence of Allen's arrangements.

The Factory gig was followed by a week-long recording session at the Power Station for her second octet album, tentatively titled *Black Pools*. In almost direct juxtaposition to an album of similar name, Wynton Marsalis' *Black Codes*, Allen's work has evolved into a jumbled celebration of black culture, rather than a pristine apology. For Geri this means two things: first, she's determined to develop her own ensemble sound while working with homeys; second, she uses her ethnomusicological background to unearth the sounds and attitudes of plain folks through instrumentation and yarns.

Allen refers to her octet as the "home-based group that really transcends the last two years [the first octet album *Open On All Sides In The Middle* was recorded nearly two years ago]. It goes back to high school. Rayse Biggs, Shahida, David McMurray, all of us have been playing together off and on for 10 years. This group seems to be the most complete way to approach the music that I'm doing because it can break down into so many different functioning units—the rhythm section, the trio, the horns, a percussionist, having a solo context—and gives a world of contexts and textures to explore."

Working with old friends also makes it easier for Allen to achieve her goal of "exploring the cultural aspects of my background and my music. I'm really grateful to have a group of folks who all understand each other. These are very folksy people. I think that's one of the characteristics of the band."

Drawing upon the collective consciousness developed in what could be called the culture of migration—the relocation of rural and southern blacks to Detroit's assembly-line society—Allen tries to fashion tone poems. In an effort to explain how her compositions bond individual stories with a group identity Allen states, "Based on the tradition that our music comes out of, it starts for me with specific ideas and a personality, a living human being, that brings the music alive. So once we play something and get it down, the whole idea is to let the music become something based on who these people are."

Allen, who composes on a Weber player piano that she bought from a friend, says, "When I sit down at the piano, certain colors will come out, certain ideas. Often I start with snippets of things. I record them on a regular portable cassette recorder, and then I let them lay. I may come back later and listen to them. It's sorta like going fishing and seeing what you come up with. Other times it will come by way of a lyric and that will dictate sort of what the overall feeling the piece is."

She also adds: "I think it's important for lyrics to have a basis in realism. The lyrics that I write, the music that I write, is often based on a real experience in life—day-to-day—as opposed to pretending like you're a Tibetan monk or something and approaching music from a perspective that you are not living yourself."

This dedication to social realism often means that Allen's compositions and arrangements conjure up images that are both vivid and fleeting. A good example is a new song called *Leaf*. It's about a church social, the catfish, and the boys. Although the lyrics are by vocalist Shahida Nurullah, Allen's detailed arrangement—which includes Vernon Reid's banjo—echoes the words in a drawing, conversational manner. Or there is the broken gait of Allen's version of Delta bluesman Skip James's *Devil Got My Woman*. With the eerie howl of Roy Brook's saw solo coursing

throughout, *Devil* creeps along with the dusty fatalism of a backwater town that marks time by the twice-a-week train.

Referring to *Leaf*, Allen comments, "The lyrics are about an experience that many of us have shared, many of our backgrounds being similar. Just celebrating those experiences makes you remember home. I played in the church and sang in the choir when I was much younger. In my particular neighborhood there was an explorer scout troop along with all kinds of other social experiences."

Allen's passion for music that reflects a community can certainly be tied to her ethnomusicological studies, but it can also be traced to her upbringing in Detroit. Calling her father an educator, professionally and personally, Allen credits her home environment with building a good musical foundation. "My father's not a musician, but he was always very much into Charlie Parker. He listened, he actually went out and heard a lot of these guys when they were living. So the music was played around the house. My brother and I sometimes protested, because at the time we were into the Jackson Five and this, that, and the other. I guess later on I started to have more of an understanding of what it was my father was playing. I also grew up listening to James Brown and Motown because they were really strong at the time, and later George Clinton. They are just as much a part of my musical upbringing as the music my father played."

At the insistence of her parents, Allen, at age seven, and her brother both took piano lessons. In an effort to expose young Geri to all forms of the arts, her parents sent her to a variety of classes. Allen recalls, "I had an affinity for the visual arts, I liked dance, and I liked to draw. Eventually piano won out. We used to go to young people's concerts. I'd have to practice before I could go outside. But by high school I got into it because they had stayed on me, and once my father acted like he was really going to cancel my lessons if I didn't get it together."

The reluctant Allen's interest was further piqued when she met trumpeter Marcus Belgrave through an artist-in-residence program at Cass Tech. "He was very supportive. I've been working with him on and off over the years. He had a group called the Detroit Jazz Development Workshop that encompassed a whole range of musicians, from people my age to stellar musicians who had been playing for years. We'd rehearse traditional charts—Thad Jones' music, Ellington's music—and we'd also have a chance to write and check out our own in a sort of learn-on-the-spot environment."

Allen's growing interest in music, especially jazz, led her to enroll in Howard University's Jazz Studies Program before making the move to New York City. Her plan was to finish school and then move to New York which she did in 1979. As Allen explains it, "I had an NEA grant to study with Kenny Barron, but I got a call from Nathan Davis who I had met at a seminar. He offered me a job as a teaching assistant at the University of Pittsburgh and a place in the masters program in ethnomusicology." With this now-or-never-type offer, Allen headed off to Pittsburgh (that same year) where she had four more years to get prepared for New York. At Pitt she focused on listening to the avant garde and studying ethnic musics from around the world. And, when it came time to write a thesis, Allen shunned pianists entirely, concentrating on reedist/flutist Eric Dolphy because she had "always been touched by his music and wanted to get very close to it."

Upon her return to New York in '82, Allen resumed her studies with Barron, but she found work in short supply for an unknown newcomer. Through some of her Detroit contacts, like akLaff and Andrews, Allen was introduced to Oliver Lake. She recorded *Plug It* with Lake's quasi-reggae/funk band Jump Up. It was the start of a fruitful musical relationship. But the job that helped Allen keep her finances healthy was a six-month stint with Mary Wilson, one of the original Supremes, playing "straightahead Motown."

By 1984, Allen was working with the likes of James Newton, the Art Ensemble of Chicago's Joseph Jarman and Lester Bowie, and leading her own quartet for a brief European tour. The greater notoriety also led to Allen's recording for the German label Minor

Music. And as further evidence of her versatility, Allen has worked with the eclectic Black Rock Coalition Orchestra, Jay Hogard, Steve Coleman, and Lake's various ensembles where she expanded her playing to include more use of electric keyboards and synthesizers.

At this point, Allen appears to have integrated her disparate influences into her approach to writing and keyboard techniques. There are times when the detail and the intensely personal quality of the music make you feel as if you've been invited into somebody's dream, but Allen leavens density with whimsy and catchy folk motifs.

When asked if she felt that her command of the folk material had improved, Allen responded, "If that's happening, I'm glad. I think the first two records that I did were more . . . I'm trying to be honest every time I do something, as in, 'This is where I'm at at a particular period.' The first record, *Printmakers*, dealt more with the traditional way the piano functions within a trio. I had been listening to a lot of trio music and the way the piano functioned with the bass and drums. The solo record *Homegrown* . . . well, of course, playing solo is a pretty old idea, and will continue to be since it is such a classic idiom. It was a great challenge to explore the piano as an orchestra within itself."

With a greater emphasis on the interplay of sections (including horns) in a large ensemble, Allen is now imposing her own jagged, two-fisted style on the band. Bass and percussion lines often seem to emanate from the keyboards as much as from the rhythm section, especially when the music evokes the slow drag of a player like pianist Jimmy Yancey. Allen offers, "There's a lot of interplay that goes on rhythmically in terms of the way the horns function. They're like melodic drums. Or the bass, for example, can be very percussive and very melodic."

"Basically, I write around the piano. Then after that, it builds to the bass and drums. And then it builds to the overall ensemble. It's like a pyramid effect that happens with the composition. To me, the bass tends to deal with outlines, so the bass lines give the personality to the compositions. So I start with pretty specific ideas in terms of how the bass will function in a particular piece."

Nonetheless, for what sounds like pretty heady stuff, Allen's intent is to tell a story, or several stories, through her music. "There are so many different focal points to tie in on and different people are gonna hook up different aspects of what life means to them." Finding joy even amidst adversity, Allen tends "to like to go for stuff that highlights enjoying your life." **db**

GERI ALLEN'S EQUIPMENT

Allen uses a Weber player piano at home. It's an old one with no player piano mechanism in it. "As for other pianos, I prefer a Bechstein because the mechanisms, the sound quality, and the action are all good to me. They are hard to get. After that I like the Steinway and then a Yamaha." Regarding her Alesis drum machine Allen says, "Programming-wise it is a more direct approach. The sounds on this machine are a mix of many drum machines which I like. It is also a touch-sensitive, 16-bit machine, which is a nice quality, and you can tune it."

"I use a Roland JX3P, which is the first keyboard that I got—well actually I got a Moog first. It's basically a dinosaur, but it is analog and I like the sound. It has a warm feel." Allen also makes use of a Yamaha TX81Z "keyboard module. It has a lot of sounds that the DX has, it's programmable, and it has micro-tuning which means that I can get more detail." Other equipment includes an Atari 1040-ST and a Roland S220 Sampler. Allen is in the process of purchasing a Yamaha DX-7 IIIFD.

GERI ALLEN SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader		with Steve Coleman
<i>Black Pools</i> —(yet to be released)		<i>Motherland Pulse</i> —JMT 850001
<i>Open On All Sides In The Middle</i> —Minor Music 1013		<i>On The Edge Of Tomorrow</i> —JMT 860005
<i>Homegrown</i> —Minor Music 004		<i>World Expansion</i> —JMT 870010
<i>Printmakers</i> —Minor Music 001		with Sonya Robinson
		Sonya—Columbia 40251
	with Frank Lowe	with Paul Motian
<i>Decision In Paradise</i> —Soul Note 1082		<i>Monk In Motian</i> —JMT (August release, no # yet)
	with Oliver Lake	with Charlie Haden, Paul Motian
<i>Expandable Language</i> —Black Saint 0074		title unknown—Soul Note 121162 (September release)
<i>Gallery</i> —Gramavision 18-609-1		with James Newton
<i>Impala</i> —Gramavision 18-8710-1		<i>Romance And Revolution</i> —Blue Note 85134
<i>Plug It</i> (w/Jump Up)—Gramavision 8206		
	with Wayne Shorter	
	Jay Ryder—Columbia 44110	

By JOHN DILIBERTO

Klaus Schulze: Synthesizer Universe



PO.E.M. MUSIKVERLAG

Instrument panels flicker rhythmically at the corner of your eyes. Crystal patterns converge symmetrically out of a winter snowfall. A roller-coaster plummets along an infinite track through a tunnel of sights and sounds. These are the visual images conjured up by the music of Klaus Schulze, a legendary German synthesist who has inspired a legion of disciples and imitators.

His 1973 album was called *Picture Music*, and 15 years later, Schulze is still shifting sonic patterns. His long compositions with a sequencer pulse propel you through a shifting textural terrain. His music embodies a minimalist aesthetic that allows sounds and textures to slowly build a raga-like sense of time, a jazz-like spontaneity, and a classical sense of grandeur.

"I think that's the advantage of this kind of music, like classical music," says Schulze. "I think my music has always been the kind that you start to listen to, you feel relaxed, and then begin seeing a mental movie. It demands a certain amount of time to get into it. If you have too many breaks or segments, you can't concentrate on a single thing that you might like to concentrate on, with moods changing back and forth like a ping-pong ball. We have pop music to do that so we don't have to."

Before there was a "New Age," Klaus Schulze was creating exotic landscapes and fantastic voyages in sound. He produced the popular Japanese synthesist Kitaro when Kitaro was a member of the Far East Family Band in the '70s. "He was a funny guy," laughs Schulze. "He didn't know anything about synthesizers." Kitaro, Jean-Michel Jarre, Steve Roach, and countless others follow a path soldered by Klaus Schulze.

I spoke with Schulze recently at the Chelsea Hotel in New York. He was on a rare visit to the United States to watch the Elise Monte Dance Company adapt two of his works, *Spielglocken* and *Death Of An Analogue*, for a performance that also includes works by trumpeter/composer Jon Hassell and percussionist/composer David Van Tieghem.

Schulze's imposing 6'5" frame is belied by his enthusiastic personality. "Childlike" is the word that most often turns up when associates talk about him. In contrast to his music, which is often so heavy and serious, Schulze laughs a lot, especially at himself, with a broad grin bursting through his short, cropped beard. Although his publicity still uses a mid-'70s photograph with shoulder-length hair, Schulze no longer looks like a left-over hippie.

But in the '60s and '70s Schulze was a certified psychedelic explorer. Having had classical guitar lessons as a teenager, he switched to drums for the power of rock & roll and wound up in the original Tangerine Dream, with then-guitarist Edgar Froese and Conrad Schnitzler on cello and homemade electronics. Their first album, *Elec-*

tronic Meditation, was an acid nightmare that sought to break away from the American and British rock music that dominated the German scene.

"Tangerine Dream was just a reaction like punk," he recalls fondly. "We had to do something different. To me *Irrlicht* and *Electronic Meditation* are the punk albums of electronic music."

Schulze left Tangerine Dream to form a group called Ash Ra Tempel with guitarist Manuel Gottsching. West Berlin was feverish with new music, stoked by psychedelic drugs, the German electronic avant garde, and underground music from the Grateful Dead to Pink Floyd. Many of the groups recorded on the Ohr label, run by Rolf-Ulrich Kaiser. It was Kaiser's idea to apply the name "space music" to these artists. He called them "Cosmic Couriers" and at one point organized a month-long psychedelic jam session.

"Oh no!" groans Schulze when I bring it up. It's one of those moments he'd rather forget, like John Coltrane walking the bar. "The producer, Ulrich Kaiser, was into cosmic thinking and was taking a lot of trips at this time. He said it's not enough to do albums, we have to be a cosmic family, Cosmic Couriers, who bring the message all over the world and to the universe. So he rented a studio for four weeks and we all went in there and we were obliged to take a trip at the entrance. You'd walk in and there would be a table with LSD, pot, and everything. There was part of Tangerine Dream, Wallenstein, Popol Vuh, Ash Ra, myself."

Several albums were released from these sessions, including *The Cosmic Jokers* and *Galactic Supermarket*. "It was a joke," he concludes. "As music, I don't take it seriously, but as a joke I accept it."

Schulze has come a long way since those heady days, recording 20 solo albums under his own name, several albums with a collaborative group called Richard Wahnfried, and many other projects. His music has matured and developed since his first album, *Irrlicht*, in 1972. Basically a drone recording, *Irrlicht* merged an electronically-mutated organ with an uncooperative orchestra.

As his synthesizer arsenal increased with Moogs, Arps, the VCS 3, and others, the music became more complex. His early records, *Cyborg*, *Picture Music*, *Blackdance*, and *Moondawn* created layers of swirling sounds and ostinato rhythm sequences, recorded direct to two-track. To create his chordal beds, he would place weights on the keys to hold down sustained chords, while four-step sequencers purred on automatic pilot. "It was the first time that you could have a strong rhythm without having a band," says Schulze. "No bass player could play these things because he'd go crazy. And it has its own power, this hypnotic, psychedelic feeling." Schulze would solo wildly over this backdrop, throwing in sound effects and melodic inventions.

"Now I build sequences that are like a bass line because the new computers can store sequences that don't repeat," he enthuses. "We worked for seven or eight years with the old eight- and 16-step sequencers, but it gets boring. And the newcomers in this music just play sequencers with sounds on top of it and *that* really gets boring."

Schulze admits he's not a great keyboardist. "Medium," is how he modestly assesses his skills. "I'm not classically trained, I'm self-taught. But I've been playing for 20 years, so it's better. It's enough for what I want to do with my music. I don't want to play Chopin on a synthesizer."

He's a new strain of musician—the synthesizer virtuoso—and along with his peers like Tangerine Dream, he had few signposts to show the way. It was either the avant garde of Morton Subotnick, the facile pitch-bending of Keith Emerson, or the classical renditions of Wendy Carlos. "The first electronic people I heard were Morton Subotnick and Walter [Wendy] Carlos. Subotnick was too out for me and Carlos, I only liked when he did *Sonic Seasonings* and *Timesteps* and the music from *A Clockwork Orange*. But if you play Bach with a synthesizer, like Tomita, it's useless."

Schulze erected his own signpost with the album *Timewind* in '75. It featured two 30-minute compositions, *Bayreuth Return* and *Wahnfried 1883*, and was dedicated to his hero composer Richard Wagner. But unlike Wagner's dynamic bombast, Schulze sculpted a darkly meditative mood that was like stepping into a suspended time zone. "For me, *Timewind* was the most classical electronic album," he says.

Timewind won the prestigious French Grand Prix Du Disques for 1975. Previous winners had included Soft Machine, Pink Floyd, and Jimi Hendrix. "Two years later, Patti Smith got it," laughs Schulze. "*Timewind* was totally electronic and didn't fit in any category."

Ask any New Age or space music synthesist, and they'll tell you *Timewind* was the signal album of their careers. "*Timewind* was the album that really hit the switch for me," claims Steve Roach. He's a popular synthesist who has used Schulze's music as a launching pad for his own personal sound heard on the albums *Structures From Silence* and *Dreamtime Return*. "Klaus is like the icon of the synth hero. The whole aura was very attractive to someone who was looking for a new direction. There was one individual creating this incredible amount of sound. The whole presence to the music and the way he presented it was very exciting and mysterious. So much of the initial tones that were struck by Klaus are still ringing out and affecting the music."

While dozens of synthesists are trapped in the sequencer patterns that Schulze and Tangerine Dream created in 1975, Schulze has moved on, helped out by advances in technology. He's often asked to test pilot new synthesizers and was one

of the first to go digital with the now-defunct GDS Digital Synthesizer in 1980, on his album *Dig It*. Klaus has a penchant for corny wordplay, i.e., *Dig It*, digit, digital. (Get it?) He also jumped right into samplers and is one of the early abusers of the orchestral hit that dominates pop and rap records. "I was the first one to use it but after that I was afraid to because everyone was using it," pleads Schulze defensively.

Schulze says he created several sounds on the Fairlight that have become part of the contemporary music vocabulary. "I did a couple of sounds for Fairlight," he says nonchalantly. "If you listen to Jan Hammer, all his sounds were on my records earlier. Especially the chorus sound called AAR1 on the Fairlight; it's a chorussed breathing sound. It's used a lot on *Miami Vice*. I made that in Australia with another guy. We did a few sounds, an orchestral break, the breathing chorus, and the pan-flute sounds. A lot were done with the Eventide Harmonizer which digitally adds high frequencies to the top without adding any noise. That was a big process on all the voices we did. It was '79 or '80 that we did that. Immediately on the first records I used them, and then suddenly it was like a wave, everyone had them. The chorus, Jan Hammer loves the way I do it."

Schulze certainly made use of all those sounds on his '80s recordings, *Audentity*, *Dziekuje Poland*, *Trancefer*, *Angst*, and *Interface*. With computers to make more complex structures and with the aid of classical pianist Rainier Bloss, his music became more complex, though no less floating.

"We can extend into long pieces," he explains. "It's like a symphony. They're like symphonies and I think the feeling is also very much like a classical feeling. The perception and presentation are a bit like classical music. The only thing is that sometimes I have heavy rhythms on drums. But that comes from my past, when I was a drummer."

Of course, for many of his albums, including the classic *Timewind* and *Mirage*, there were no drums, electronic or acoustic. But then he met former Santana drummer Mike Shrieve in '76. They had played together in a conceptual work called *Go!*, written by Stomu Yamashta and featuring Steve Winwood and Al DiMeola. Shrieve loved Schulze's music, but hated the drumming, which was usually performed by Harold Grosskopf. "I said listen, I love your music, but I hate the drumming," recalls Shrieve. "Every time I put on one of your records I have to take it off as soon as the drumming starts because I can't stand the drumming. Let me come over and we'll do some things so I can listen to your records."

"I met Mike Shrieve and he taught me how to use the rhythm in my music without destroying the mood and feeling," concurs Schulze.

Shrieve's timbales and electronic rim shots drove Schulze compositions like *A Few Minutes After Trancefer* and *Celestica*, and gave Schulze's music a refreshing rhythmic

flexibility.

Contrary to the image of Germans as computer technofields, intellectually laboring over their terminals, Schulze is a spontaneous composer and performer, preferring to live in the moment. Even his new album, *Babel*, (with Andreas Grosser), is a kind of computer jam session. And he's one of the few synthesists who performs live. The exuberance and improvisational drive he brings to the stage are evident on the concert recordings, . . . *Live* . . . and *Dziekuje Poland (Thank You, Poland)*. He plays halls from 1,000 to 20,000 seats in Europe, but he has yet to perform in the United States.

Schulze has changed from his days as an electronic purist. When I spoke with him in '82, in his studio in West Germany, he was staunchly electronic. No wonder. His studio was like a synthesizer heaven with 24-track console, the GDS and Fairlight and the giant modular Moog system he used on early records. He boasted about listening tests where a violinist and a synthesizer played behind a screen and you couldn't hear the difference.

Like someone who has rediscovered religion, Schulze has done a complete reversal. "Before, I was a purist," he confesses. "Everything that is for acoustic sounds like shit. There are some very good sampled pianos, and on *Babel* I used a digital piano sample. In the next studio where we were working, someone was playing a Steinway. I went in and said, 'Goddamn, am I using a shit sample.' Because you forget. If you don't hear the original, you think it's a great piano sound. But then you go and play a real piano and the sample is shit. Same thing with the violin."

Schulze took several missteps in the '80s. On the Richard Wahnfried albums *Richard Wahnfried Plays Megatone* and his solo album *Interface*, the rhythms became ponderously heavy and he included vocals that were embarrassingly trite and overwrought. Fortunately he wasn't singing them. It was symptomatic of Schulze's drug and alcohol dependency, brought on by the pressures of touring and running two record companies, Innovative Communication and In Team, which he eventually sold. But Schulze went into a clinic in '85 and the change is most evident in his music.

In 1987 he released *Babel*, recorded with Andreas Grosser, and 1988 will see the release of *En = Trance*, an ambitious four-part work that combines the rhythmic drive of *Audentity* with a more spacious sonic exploration. "I think I'm becoming more classical," says Schulze reflectively. "The music will be more quiet, calm, and lovely. But there will also be harmonic soft pieces and I'm going back to sounds and environments."

As I left Schulze, he was off to see Sun Ra play at New York's Bottom Line. A meeting of two pioneers at the edge of sound. db

KLAUS SCHULZE'S EQUIPMENT

Klaus Schulze is always on the cutting edge of new technology. If there's a new piece of gear out there, he has it, and he probably had it when it was only a prototype. He has his own 24-track studio in Winsen-Aller. It's a spacious room with natural wood paneling, low lights, giant video screens, and lots of synthesizers.

He's used a Fairlight since 1980 and he still has the GDS Digital Synthesizer, although he can't get it to work and there are no engineers to fix it. His extensive MIDI set-up includes a Roland D-50, Yamaha DX-7 II, Korg DW-8000, Roland Super Jupiter Planet S, and the Roland JX-10 which he uses as a master keyboard. He also has a host of samplers headed by the Publison Infernal Machine, which also does pitch modulation, harmonizing, and reverb. "I only sample on it when I have difficult or long samples," claims Schulze. The Publison will sample up to 80 seconds of sound, 40 seconds in stereo. His other samplers include the Casio FZ-1, Akai S900, and a Roland Sampler.

But Schulze, after being a digital purist, is reintroducing analog synthesizers into his music. His old Moog Modular System, the C3S with sequencer, looms over his studio like an ancient relic. He doesn't use that as often as he does his Yamaha CS-80, two Mellotrons, or three Mini-Moogs. Schulze feels that the new instruments are not personal enough with their banks of preset sounds. "I can't hear the DX-7 anymore," he cries.

Drum machines include the Oberheim DMX and Roland 626. He also has a Korg Digital Voice Processor, EMT Plate Reverb, and Yamaha, Ibanez, and Korg Stereo Delays.

He sequences with a Roland MC8-500, the Hybrid Arts Program on the Atari, and the composers language from Fairlight.

Schulze's spacescapes are all laid down through an Amek 3000 computerized mixing console, an Otari 24-track, and a Sony 1610 U-Matic Digital Mastering Machine.

KLAUS SCHULZE SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader

BABEL—Virgin 7 90654-1
 IRRLICHT—PDU/Ohr Pld 5095
 CYBORG—Gramavision 18-7020-1
 PICTURE MUSIC—Gramavision 18-7021-1
 BLACKDANCE—Virgin 2003
 TIMEWIND—Virgin 2006
 MOONDAWN—Isadora 9001
 BODY LOVE—Brain 813 658-2
 MIRAGE—Island 9461
 BODY LOVE II—Island 9510
 X—Gramavision 18-7024-1
 DUNE—Gramavision 18-7022-1
 DIG IT!—Brain 0060 353
 . . . LIVE . . .—Brain 0080 048
 TRANCEFER—Gramavision 18-7024-1
 AUDENTITY—Innovative Communications 80025/26
 DZIEKUJE POLAND—Brain 831 206-1
 AFRICA—InTeam 20001
 DRIVE INN—InTeam 20002
 ANGST—InTeam 20003
 INTERFACE—Brain 827673-2
 DREAMS—Brain 831 206-1
 MINDPHASER—Gramavision 18-7023-1
 EN = TRANCE—(unreleased)

with Richard Wahnfried

TIME ACTOR—Innovative Communications 58.005
 TONWELLE—Innovative Communications 80.006
 . . . PLAYS MEGATONE—InTeam 20.006
 MEDITATION—InTeam 20.009

with Michael Shrieve

TRANSFER STATION BLUE—Fortuna 023

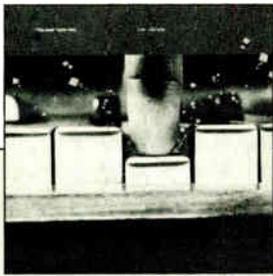
with Cosmic Couriers

THE COSMIC JOKERS—PDU Pld. SQ 6012
 GALACTIC SUPERMARKET—PDU Pld. SQ 6042

with Stomu Yamashta

GO—Island 9387
 GO! LIVE!—Island 10

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



CECIL TAYLOR

LIVE IN BOLOGNA—Leo 404/405

Personnel: Taylor, piano; William Parker, bass; Carlos Ward, reeds; Leroy Jenkins, violin; Thurman Barker, marimba, drums, percussion.

★★★★★

CHINAMPAS—Leo 153

Personnel: Taylor, voice, tympani, bells, percussion.

★★★½

Cecil Taylor has remained doggedly true to his muse for over 30 years, walking the uncertain line between atonal classicism and free-jazz improvisation with hardly a glance at passing popular or academic trends. A musical abstract expressionist, he has always placed sound before sense, using emotion and intuition to guide his imposing intellect through the labyrinthine thickets of his imagination. Two new releases on the Russian expatriate Leo Feigin's London-based Leo label display contrasting yet complementary aspects of Taylor's art. The first is a sprawling double album recorded at a concert in Italy, featuring the pianist with his latest high-energy Unit. The second is a limited-edition album of poetry recitations, with Taylor accompanied only by his own quiet percussion. Whether he's pounding out keyboard maelstroms or rasping out free verse, Taylor uses tone, texture, and rhythm to paint chaotic aural landscapes that challenge listeners to find their own meanings.

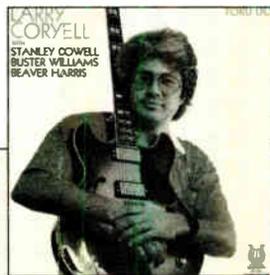
Live In Bologna runs well over 90 minutes, even though the beginnings and some of the ends of the four untitled segments have been clipped. There is little apparent formal structure, only subtle transitions, volatile moods, sporadic solos, shifty duets and trios, and changes of instrumentation—all occurring without obvious plan or prompting. Even more than previous Taylor Units, his present quintet moves and breathes like a single, hypersensitive organism.

Taylor was a prime inspiration to Chicago's AACM. AACM alumni Leroy Jenkins on violin, and Thurman Barker on marimba, drums, and percussion mesh so closely with the leader that the three sound like one musician with six arms. Barker's turbulent, tempoless drumming is everywhere and nowhere all at once, while Jenkins dry, skittering fiddle often seems to emanate from inside the piano, counterpointing Taylor's complex lines with uncanny precision. William Parker is unobtrusively steady on bass, and Carlos Ward adds a welcome softness and warmth on alto saxophone and flute. But the Panamanian-born Ward, a veteran funk

and modal player, is slightly out of place in this astringent ensemble; the absence of the late Jimmy Lyons, with his biting, sour-edged tone, is poignantly palpable.

In view of its lack of commercial potential, only 500 copies of *Chinampa* have been pressed. Nevertheless, it's a valuable document and a must for Taylor fanatics. It comprises six poems, but none are titled or otherwise identified, and there is no printed text. In calmer moments Taylor's voice suggests Allen Ginsberg's disembodied baritone; when he gets worked up he sounds more like Captain Beefheart. His fractured, surrealist imagery is also reminiscent of beat and post-beat poetry, but his overarching sense of rhythm links him to such jazz poets as Joseph Jarman and Sun Ra. Taylor augments his readings with bells, kettledrums, and small percussion instruments, as well as double-tracked vocal noises. Stammering, growling, whispering, drawing out vowels and pointedly aspirating consonants, he turns words into musical riffs and gives his spoken phrases the same spiky intensity as his keyboard runs. His vocabulary, in English and Italian, is striking, but his free-associative collages convey mystical messages whose interpretation can only be guessed at. In the end, his piano is more expressive.

—Larry Birnbaum



LARRY CORYELL

TOKU DO—Muse 5350; *MOMENT'S NOTICE*; *'ROUND MIDNIGHT*; *TOKU DO*; *JUST FRIENDS*; *MY FUNNY VALENTINE*; *SOPHISTICATED LADY*.

Personnel: Coryell, guitar; Stanley Cowell, piano; Buster Williams, bass; Beaver Harris, drums.

★★★★★

Coryell has made the round-trip back to jazz. Here he tackles a program that's challenging on two counts: the material itself, which is loaded with harmonic depth, and previous recordings of these familiar tunes, which dare him to devise something different.

The search for something different has led Coryell in different directions over the years. His work on *Duster*, the Gary Burton-led date that's been called the first fusion album, remains a strong legacy. His darkly burning tone has changed little from that late '60s session and links past to present most memorably on this session's ballads, *'Round Midnight* and *Sophisticated Lady*; Lady having a harmonically dazzling solo performance. Fortunately,

none of the gratuitous slickness of latter-day assembly-line fusion seeps into this date.

Coryell went through a gypsy phase sometime after *Duster*. A good example of his work is on the Stephane Grappelli album *Young Django*, recorded in 1979. The swirling convolutions of his solo on *Just Friends*, this album's scorcher, show that the influence remains healthy nearly a decade later.

Then there are other influences—or perhaps coincidental derivations—such as the Wes Montgomery-like octaves on *Midnight* and call-and-response on Buster Williams' title tune blues; the echoic, repeated-note phrases suggesting Les Paul; and the down-shifting bop sequences so reminiscent of Tal Farlow, Jimmy Raney, and perhaps even Jim Hall. Coryell has put these elements together synergistically and personally to the point where he's one of the more recognizable guitarists on the scene today. But then he always was.

The rhythm section here is first-rate. Cowell, a bop master with an articulate touch, ranks with Hank Jones and Kenny Barron, and on the title track he drives like the late Hampton Hawes. Williams and Harris complement each other, the bassist with that spread-foot beat and the drummer with crisper time definition recalling Billy Higgins.

So, what it comes down to is this: a quartet record with an investment of mature, developed talent, judicious self-editing, and a sense of discovery. You have to admire the concept as well as the execution in these times

—Owen Cordle



HENRY THREADGILL

EASILY SLIP INTO ANOTHER WORLD—RCA/Novus 3025-1-N; *I CAN'T WAIT TILL I GET HOME*; *BLACK HANDS BEJEWELLED*; *SPOTTED DICK IS PUDDING*; *MY ROCK*; *HALL*; *AWARD THE SQUADTETT*.

Personnel: Threadgill, alto and tenor saxophones, clarinet; Rasul Siddik, trumpet; Frank Lacy, trombone, french horn, flugelhorn; Diedre Murray, cello; Fred Hopkins, bass; Pheeroan akLaff, drums; Reggie Nicholson, drums; Aisha Putli, vocals (cut 4).

★★★★½

Henry Threadgill loves music, all music. Polkas, calypsos, blues, gospel, circus music, salsa music, dixieland, ragtime... well, maybe not all music. I don't hear no heavy-metal here. But like his three brilliant septet albums on the independent About Time label (*When Was That?* 1004, *Just The Facts And Pass The*

Bucket 1005, and *Subject To Change* 1007) and last year's RCA/Novus debut, *You Know The Number* (3013-1-N). Here, the inventive, uncompromising composer/arranger picks up the pieces from his musical memories, pops them in a blender and pours them out into odd-shaped goblets for the listener to drink and savor.

Very ambitious stuff. Often delightful, full of feeling and wit. And full of surprises, like when he kicks the band into double-time on the loose, lazy-rolling dixieland-ish number, *Spotted Dick Is Pudding*. As if the song didn't already charm the pants off you, then . . . bam! Double-time madness and Henry's blowing up a storm. Like a colorful tale that slowly unfolds with plot twists and conflicts and resolutions, this nine-minute opus entertains like a good storyteller does.

Threadgill's songs have a life of their own. They swagger and strut like colorful, eccentric characters with a strong sense of who they are. You have to meet them on their terms, and it ain't about radioplay.

You might draw comparisons to other renegade composers—Charles Mingus, AACM mate Muhal Richard Abrams (to whom Threadgill dedicates the very aggressive vehicle, *Hall*). The names Carla Bley, Gil Evans and Duke Ellington (particularly *Black, Brown*

& *Beige*) also come to mind.

As in past septet works, Threadgill again goes with the two drummers, bass/cello combination, and trombone/trumpet/sax frontline. With his very intricate, clever arrangements, he can often get the effect of a big band, as he does here on the ebullient *Black Hands Bejewelled* and the more mournful *My Rock*, which features the warm, sensuous vocals of Aisha Puli.

Award The Squadtett has the giddy parade band appeal of *When Was That?*; like a crazed fight song for some mythical college football team in a movie directed by Spike Lee. Funny stuff.

And Threadgill once again embraces the funereal dirge with Olu Dara's *I Can't Wait Till I Get Home*. It's slow-moving and mournful like *Melin* and *Soft Suicide At The Baths* from previous works. And it won't likely show up in high rotation on jazz radio playlists. But Threadgill is Threadgill and he'll no doubt keep churning out funereal dirges and Jelly Roll Morton tributes and gospel-tinged romps as well as the music he's also continually composing for theatre, film, and dance. The guy's prolific and important. Thank goodness that Steve Backer had the vision (and balls) to bring him over to a major label. Maybe with this wider exposure, more people will be able

to appreciate Henry Threadgill's genius.

—bill milkowski



DONALD BYRD

HARLEM BLUES—Landmark 1516: *HARLEM BLUES; FLY, LITTLE BYRD; VOYAGE A DEUX; BLUE MONK; ALTER EGO; SIR MASTER KOOL GUY.*

Personnel: Byrd, trumpet, flugelhorn, cornet; Kenny Garrett, alto saxophone; Mulgrew Miller, piano; Rufus Reid, bass; Marvin "Smitty" Smith, drums; Mike Daugherty, synthesizer (cuts 1, 5).

★ ★ ★

SING! SING! SING!

By Will Friedwald

Standards, my foot! There are no standards anymore in the area of music that we've come to describe as "standards."

Anybody that wants to pass him or herself off as a singer can get a booking at a New York cabaret simply by guaranteeing to fill a certain number of seats (in other words, buying the house). And anyone can get a record made, either by pressing it themselves or by convincing a label to put it out; and labels can be convinced both with money or the presence of a big-name musician. Once it's out there, most critics couldn't tell the difference between the vanity product and the talent.

That's the bad news. The good news is harder to find, but it's there. True, we've dropped through the floor, and let unbelievably bad singers claim the music of Berlin, Porter, and Ellington (traditionally, you couldn't get much worse than Eddie Fisher or Theresa Brewer. Today, Linda Ronstadt gives new meaning to the word "bad"), but we've also pushed back the walls, as Peggy Lee has advocated since the '40s, to find material for jazz-related singers beyond Tin Pan Alley. And in one or two cases, we've opened up the ceilings for

some unexpectedly excellent vocalists and vocal records to reach new heights.

Surprisingly or not surprisingly, depending on what you expect, these new developments are least reflected in the season's crop of debut albums; a crop which make up a significant chunk of any new batch of vocal records. **Cindy Devereux** has come up with what might serve as the model for a generic female vocal album: generic title (*Cindy Devereux And Friends*), foreign label (Aspasia 201), homemade cover with good-looking babe, 10 unimaginatively selected tunes that have nothing to do with each other, pretty voice with little depth, arrangements with good musicians but which depend on the singer to do more than she is able. Though **Shannon Gibbons** benefits from the usual high production standards at Soul Note (SN 1163) on her first release—they give her Cecil Bridgewater and half of Sphere—and she's proportionately better as a performer, having some interesting rhythmic tricks up her sleeve, she still doesn't make much of an impression one way or the other.

Another newcomer **Roseanna Vitro**, with her cover girl voice and face, quietly takes us to *A Quiet Place* (Skyline 1001). Now I'm not going to argue that there isn't a place in jazz for quietness, but this quiet set of quiet (mostly) originals quietly sung and quietly accompanied would provoke Gabby Hayes to comment: "Mighty quiet out there. It's almost too quiet!" The pluckier

Michelle Hendricks, on her first album (*Carryin' On*, Muse 5336) at least has the faults and virtues young artists are supposed to have: some of her placement is a little sloppy and not all of her original songs or ideas work out (such as an attempt to reconstruct one of Carole King's songs as if it weren't standing still). *But*, she blends well with her accompaniment (the most "all star" of them all, featuring Stan Getz on two tracks) and has a warm sound more reminiscent of Jeanne Lee than any of the singers her father Jon Hendricks worked with. Hopefully, it will grow even warmer and surer on her second and third albums.

Theresa Brewer's new re-issue *Good News* (Doctor Jazz 40951) makes for the most listenable Brewer disc I've ever heard, partly because it uses a Broadway show score uniquely suited to jazz purposes, capably laid out with lots of room for blowing by the well-titled World's Greatest Jazz Band of Yank Lawson and Bob Haggart (not to mention Bob Wilber, Bobby Hackett, Bud Freeman, Vic Dickenson, Bennie Morton, and Bucky Pizzarelli). But mainly it's because it restricts Brewer's sub-hillbilly hog calling to mercifully brief vocal refrains (if only she'd refrain from vocalizing). Maybe you can program your CD player to bypass her contributions.

One of the positive happenings is a noticeable proliferation of overseas vocal activity; though Europeans were able to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32

RANDY BRECKER

IN THE IDIOM—Passport Jazz 88039: *No Scratch*; *Hit Or Miss*; *Forever Young*; *Sang*; *There's A Mingus A Monk Us*; *You're In My Heart*; *Little Miss P*.

Personnel: Brecker, trumpet, flugelhorn; Joe Henderson, tenor saxophone; David Kikoski, piano; Ron Carter, bass; Al Foster, drums.

★★★★

Byrd was a trumpeter to be reckoned with in the '50s and '60s. In this album, he tries to come back after too many years of fusion and academic posts. (He now teaches at Oberlin.) The results are mixed. His squeezed, poignant, straight-out-of-the-'50s tone is almost pretty. You can tell he has practiced by the sequences he plays, and he has an affecting way of falling off notes that recalls early Miles Davis.

On the other hand, the technical stakes have risen steadily in the last 20 years, reducing a catch-up Byrd to a rank-and-file trumpeter. As an improviser, he often reacts rather than leads. This is most noticeable on *Blue Monk* and his own *Sir Master Kool Guy*, a brisk tune that recalls *Giant Steps*.

The rest of the band is serviceable. Garrett, like Byrd, is best on the title cut. The slow pace and spiritual-like structure of this W. C. Handy tune put Garrett in a Cannonball Adderley bag and Byrd (on cornet) in an old-timey New Orleans bag. On other cuts the alto man occasionally turns sour-toned and tedious.

What is there to say about the rhythm section players? They're pros, practically beyond a bad performance—ever. The tunes? Handy, Monk, James Williams (*Alter Ego*), two by Byrd, and Garrett's *Voyage*: a varied lot. The rating? A good-but-average album that has plenty of counterparts today.

In the same idiom (i.e., the Blue Note sound of the '50s and '60s) is *In The Idiom*. Since Brecker is a versatile and ubiquitous trumpeter, one assumes that this is a deliberate focus on his roots, especially since he wrote all the tunes. Anyway, the tunes and arrangements echo Horace Silver, Kenny Dorham, Lee Morgan, Monk, and Mingus, even as Brecker's trumpet and flugelhorn recall Morgan, Dorham, Freddie Hubbard, Howard McGhee, Clifford Brown and '60s Miles. And . . . Brecker has the chops to play it cool or hot, laidback or virtuosic.

Henderson, needless to say, is a good partner for the trumpeter, as he was for many others on those Blue Note dates. His earthy-but-intelligent convolutions, plus the Kikoski-Carter-Foster rhythm section (shades of Hancock-Carter-Williams behind Miles), give the session extra authority.

Personal favorites among the sounds: the Silver-ish groove of *No Scratch*, the alternating Monk and Mingus phrases on *There's A Mingus A Monk Us*, Brecker's Miles- and Don Cherry-like phrasing on *Little Miss P*, Henderson's warm, fidgeting tenor on the ballad *Forever Young*, and Carter's noble pulse throughout the record. One compelling difference between Brecker and Byrd that these records demonstrate is that Brecker knows where he's going and Byrd seems to have trouble making up his mind.

—owen cordle



NO AGE MUSIC FOR THE WORLD

Capitol

ON HIGH QUALITY XDR CASSETTES, RECORDS AND COMPACT DISCS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 30

produce credible swing (France), bop (Britain), cool (Sweden), and free jazz (the teutonic), only a few decent jazz-related singers come from non-American backgrounds, like Al Bowlly and Rita Reys. In fact, the one distinguishing characteristic of the best-known foreign jazz vocalist, Cleo Laine, is her complete inability to understand the American jazz-pop song idiom; European jazz composers have traditionally cast Americans (Jeanne Lee, Lauren Newton, Sheila Jordan) to play Adelaide Hall to their Duke Ellington.

Three femme foreigners prove that something is indeed happening over there, each working in accordance with their country's own traditions of jazz. The Italian **Tiziana Ghiglioni's** second Soul Note release, *Somebody Special* (SN 1156), pairs her with one of the pre-eminent figures on the Italian jazz scene, Steve Lacy (I didn't say he was Italian). His music is so compelling it shouldn't bother anyone that the vocals, though good, are largely extraneous. **Monica Borrfor's**, on *Your Touch* (Caprice 1350)—the only one of these three who deals in standard lyrics and melody—walks the classic Swedish line between emotion and restraint, in a set of slow, bop-tinged ballads, with a rich, dark voice, and a good quartet. The major English avant garde vocal artist, **Maggie Nicols**, has come up with a free-form scat technique typical of the world's greatest literary heritage, in which she not only improvises melody but, as far as I can tell, words and structure. She starts out reciting a reformist diatribe, which soon begins to stammer and abstract itself into a swirl of wordless funhouse mirror images, flickering before the ears like Soviet montage film editing; apparently intended to reflect the paranoia and frustration of modern life. As with her previous collaborations with skittering, stabbing pianist Peter Nu, don't assume you'll find any bourgeois gratification on her current *Don't Assume* (Leo Records 145, distributed in America by N.M.D.S.). And though Nicols does exhaust you, she'll never bore you.

The vocalist/instrumentalist tradition comes with certain limitations, which, on the positive side, act as freeing-up elements, ie, if you both play and sing no one expects you to do either as well as a full-timer would. Usually their efforts serve the utilitarian function of wallpaper music behind dinner and conversation rather than being something to listen to. And most singer/players have no business making records (unless you use the records as background for another activity). **Shirley Horn's** previous album *Garden Of The Blues* (Steeplechase), a remarkable song-cycle describing big city alienation, was an exception. Her latest, *I Thought About You* (Verve 833 235-1), a rather blasé grouping of random standards, is not. Horn, who for years has been showing the potential to extend the Fats Waller/Rose Murphy/Joe Mooney line of singing keyboardists, has

been cheated in getting such a wishy-washy program for her first American major label release.

Judith Kay, who plays guitar and sings in the Brazilian jazz-pop idiom on *Everybody's Talkin'* (Tasty 100-1), is caught in a singular bind: her voice is too *gringo* to authentically get into that particular groove (unlike Astrud Gilberto or A. C. Jobim's vocal efforts, Kay can sing in tune). Yet she's hardly a distinctive enough stylist to use the south-of-the-border stuff as a background, like Sinatra with Jobim or Clooney with Prez Prado. Still, she's found a unique genre that few others are exploring vocally, and it'll be worth paying attention to hear how she develops it.

Songbooks are generally a pretty lame excuse for an album, in spite of the commercial appeal of combining a big name singer with a big name composer (Fitzgerald's "general" Verve are inevitably better than the *Songbooks*, but try telling that to the folks at Polygram), except when vocalists and/or arrangers of extremely high ability get involved. The British **Helen Shapiro** strikes me as a worthwhile band vocalist (it helps to be named Helen) with Humphrey Lyttelton, who can't quite sustain attention for 20 Johnny Mercer tracks on *The Quality Of Mercer* (Calligraph 014, distributed in America by Cadence/North Country). He's especially handicapped with a virtually unchanging setting and tempos. As a result, Benny Green's anecdotal annotations supply more interest than the music.

But when songbooks are done right, they can be among the most satisfying albums ever. Harbinger Records' final **Maxine Sullivan** album, *Together—The Music of Jule Styne* (released on Atlantic 81783-1) proves this, capturing an artist who at the time of her death last April, had attained prowess as a master of both interpretation and swing completely unforeseen in her early years of tonal cool. The Keith Ingham arrangements and production leave behind other contemporary Sullivan albums (and she turned out dozens) almost as if they were the work of another, lesser singer. Besides giving her a thoughtful program of Styne songs—artfully juxtaposing the standard with the esoteric, and varying the time frame, the moods, and the instrumentation, the producers made seamlessly creative use of overdubbing, having realized—as Sullivan's other producers failed to—that it was unfair to expect the 75-year-old Maxine to hit every note on the money. Instead, they racked up studio time until each note was perfect, and put in the effort to craft an absolutely flawless record. A fitting memorial to an artist who is already missed.

A few recent releases also afford us the opportunity to examine the relationship between jazz singing and contemporary popular music. **Lorex Alexandria** goes back to the beginnings of soul, her work being a thoughtful synthesis of early '60s jazz-blues influences such as Dinah

Washington, Della Reese, and Carmen McRae. Contrary to the habits of most singers, Alexandria has grown lighter, not heavier, in the last 30 years, and her newest, *Dear To My Heart*, with the Gordon Brisker Band (Discovery 547) proves that light doesn't have to be shallow. Another post-Washington singer, **Aretha Franklin**, has fashioned a world of gospel and soul, with little room left for straight blues, jazz, or standards. But any friend of a friend is a friend, and jazz fans who don't fancy soul or proto-soul should make CBS's new issue of vintage 1962-65 Franklin, *After Hours* (Col. 40708) their token Aretha album. At times she works too hard to compensate for lame material while bizarrely-arranged strings get in her way, but the voice comes through.

And what of fusion, that cousin of soul and jazz which combines the worst of both worlds? Now there's traditional surface fusion, demonstrated at it's purist by **Dianna Reeves** (Blue Note 46906) as well as a more intriguing, deeper kind of jazz with rock elements sung by Cassandra Wilson (a singer who ingests rock and soul rhythms as artfully as earlier jazzmen used marches and waltzes). Reeves zaps around the globe by remote control, covering all musics from Ellington and Tin Pan Alley to the Third World, with a glossy, non-committal electro-sheen. Generally pretty, the George Duke-produced album manages to remain interesting without once suggesting depth. In this intercontinental trek Reeves is a demographically-directed Dorothy, still looking for what she couldn't find in her own backyard.

As the only singer to do what she does, (and along with Bobby McFerrin, one of the major vocal discoveries of the decade), **Cassandra Wilson's** only competition is herself, and her second feature album *Days Aweigh* (JMT 870012, distributed by Polygram Special Imports) represents an advance over her first (*Point Of View* JMT 860004). The gnarly acoustic horn textures of that earlier set grab me a little more, but Wilson has moved forward in polishing her total sound, accepting control of both background and foreground. And her own singing has grown correspondingly deeper, which can be most easily measured in one of the album's two standards, *Some Other Time*. Along with guru / altoist / co-producer Steve Coleman, she's also grown heavy enough to express lightness, avant garde enough to get traditional, and serious enough to be funny. On *ElectroMagnolia*, she and duet partner Olu Dara yodel and banter like a post-modern Louis Prima and Keely Smith afloat in a sea of electric mandolins.

Wilson and Sullivan help to renew my faith. Perhaps, despite the abundance of vanity productions on one hand and over-promoted, under-talented phonies on the other, the record industry isn't completely out of sync with the important jazz vocal artists of today. More and more, the message comes across: the good singers are out there, they will be heard. **db**



FRED FRITH

THE TECHNOLOGY OF TEARS (AND OTHER MUSIC FOR DANCE AND THEATRE)—SST 172:

SADNESS, ITS BONES BLEACHED BEHIND US; YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT; THE PALACE OF LAUGHTER, THE TECHNOLOGY OF TEARS; JIGSAW; JIGSAW CODA; PROPAGANDA (SHELTER FOR THEM ALL, A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF CONFLICT, THE TURNING OF AN HOURGLASS, BIRTH OF A REBEL, YOUR BEAUTIFUL CORPSE, THE EXCELLENT HYENA, THE OLD MAN MOVES A MOUNTAIN, THE WOLF DEMON PART 1, MEDITATION UPON PROPAGANDA, LIBERTY, THE RELENTLESS LANDSCAPE, THE GAZE THAT SINGS, THE WOLF DEMON PART 2, RASHOMON).

Personnel: Frith, guitar, violin, synclavier, all other instruments; John Zorn, alto saxophone (cuts 1-3); Christian Marclay, turntables (1-3); Tenko, voice (1-3); Jim Staley, trombone (4,5).

★ ★ ★½

SEMANTICS

BONE OF CONTENTION—SST 167: R-BYTE; MOCK FRY; TRUMPED UP CHARGES; ADRESSEE UNKNOWN; SUBSEQUENTIAL; SHREDDED; REVOLVER; ANIMAL FARM; PAY FOR THEIR CRIMES; CODE RING; THE BIG SLEEP.

Personnel: Ned Rothenberg, alto, tenor saxophones, bass clarinet, ocarina, panpipe, FZ-1 programming; Elliott Sharp, double-neck guitar-bass, guitar, six-string bass, lap steel guitar, guitar-controlled Mirage; Samm Bennett, drums, acoustic, electric percussion, voice, FZ-1.

★ ★ ★ ★

Fred Frith (if you haven't already made his acquaintance—where have you been?—see the feature in **db**, Jan. '83) is quite the Renaissance Man of New Music, having played with most everyone of note on both sides of the Atlantic, in a vast assortment of controlled and spontaneous situations. The two discs of *The Technology Of Tears* contain a variety of pieces originally created to accompany dance or theatrical activity, and serve to showcase Frith's talents as conceptualist, studio virtuoso, multi-instrumentalist, and timbral alchemist.

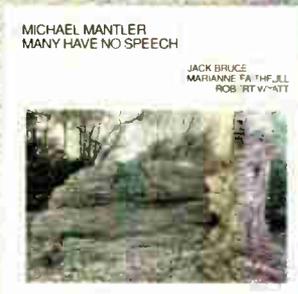
The title suite in three parts is the collection's most surprising, sustained, and successful. Layers of instruments (many, one suspects, synclavier generated) support, splatter, or slowly intrude upon the unfolding series of labyrinthine events in curious but convincing fashion, though the overall effect is one of tense, Sartresque constraint. John Zorn's sax screeches add a human element (if one of frustration at the unnatural environment and lack of exits), even as Christian Marclay's turntables are absorbed by the flux. But the music—from the Terry Riley-ish pulse energiz-

New Music On ECM



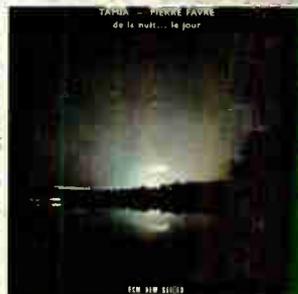
Paul Bley Quartet

Paul Bley Piano
John Serran Sop. Saxophone,
Bass Clarinet
Bill Frisell Guitar
Paul Motian Drums
ECM 835 250



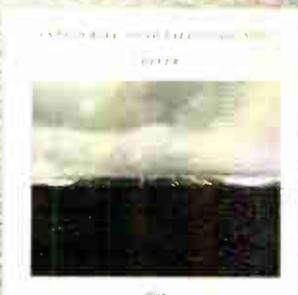
Michael Mantler Many Have No Speech

Jack Bruce Voice
Marianne Faithfull Voice
Robert Wyatt Voice
Michael Mantler Trumpet
Rick Fenn Guitar
The Danish Radio Concert Orch.
Conducted by Peder Kragerup
Words by Samuel Beckett
Ernst Meister
Philippe Soupault
WATT 835 580



Tania Pierre Favre de la nuit... le jour

Tania Voice
Pierre Favre Percussion
ECM 835 249



Enrico Reva/ Dino Saluzzi Quintet Volter

Enrico Reva Trumpet
Dino Saluzzi Bandoneon
Harry Feil Guitar
Furio Di Castri Bass
Bruce Ditmas Drums
ECM 831 395

On Compact Disc, LP and Cassettes

ing *Sadness* . . . to the vaguely Middle Eastern jig of *You Are What You Eat* to the ominous interruptions of *The Palace Of Laughter*, *The Technology Of Tears*—is everywhere intricate, inextricable, and engaging.

Jigsaw is slightly less so. A sequence of well-considered episodes casting a single theme into various vigorous lights, from repetitious minimalism to streamlined deconstruction, *Jigsaw* offers plenty of thunder but the simultaneous lightning conveys more flash than illumination. *Jigsaw Coda*, a brief postlude, could be mistaken for Ennio Morricone's

work, given its sentimental melody and Duane Eddy guitar twang. And *Propaganda*, a Whitman Sampler of 14 brief etudes of ambient sound and collage, set atmospheric scenes that never resolve into a cohesive statement.

If Frith's music is cut from a fabric of checked design, the Semantics sport black leather and spikes. Rockish and raucous, their clanging, banging textures and off-kilter, stabbing rhythms stress communal thrash, not solo epiphanies. How to label it? Heavy-metal jazz? Industrial improvisation?

The themes are often negligible; riffs pre-

dominate, buoyed on Bennett's curt, bedlam bashing, strangled by Sharp's banshee guitar. The mood is primarily ominous—especially the subterranean homesick blues of *Addresssee Unknown* and the Morpheus-drugged *The Big Sleep*—though there are brief moments of respite, as Rothenberg moans a Moorish melody on *Revolver*, and *Animal Farm* struts with comic cacophony. None of the 10 tunes last long enough to wear out their welcome, but some shut down just when they seem ready to explode in total orgiastic abandon. Alas.

—art lange

Waxing On

SOLID BLUE(S)

by Larry Birnbaum

- BIG JACK JOHNSON:** *THE OIL MAN* (Earwig 4910) ★★★★★
- LAZY LESTER:** *LAZY LESTER RIDES AGAIN* (King Snake 007) ★★★½
- NOBLE WATTS:** *RETURN OF THE THIN MAN* (King Snake 003) ★★★½
- RAFUL NEAL:** *LOUISIANA LEGEND* (Fantastic 1001) ★★★½
- KENNY NEAL:** *BIO ON THE BAYOU* (King Snake 005) ★★★★★
- THE KINSEY REPORT:** *EDGE OF THE CITY* (Alligator 4758) ★★★★★
- A.C. REED:** *I'M IN THE WRONG BUSINESS* (Alligator 4757) ★★★½
- CASEY JONES:** *SOLID BLUE* (Rooster Blues 7612) ★★★★★
- EDDIE TAYLOR:** *STILL NOT READY FOR EDDIE* (Antone's 0005) ★★★★★
- CHICAGO BOB & THE SHADOWS:** *JUST YOUR FOOL* (High Water 1010) ★★★★★
- THE HOLLYWOOD ALL STARS:** *HARD HITTING BLUES* (From Memphis (High Water 1009)) ★★★★★½
- ANSON FUNDERBURGH & THE ROCKETTS:** *SINS* (Black Top 1038) ★★★★★
- BLUE IN THE FACE:** *BLUE IN THE FACE* (Smoke Ring 10001) ★★★★★
- ROY ROGERS:** *SLIDEWINDER* (Blind Pig 2687) ★★★½
- THE PALADINS:** *THE PALADINS* (Wrestler 1687) ★★★★★
- ROY BUCHANAN:** *HOT WIRES* (Alligator 4756) ★★★★★
- GUITAR SLIM:** *ATCO SESSIONS* (Atlantic 81760-1) ★★★★★
- WILBERT HARRISON:** *LISTEN TO MY SONG* (Savoy Jazz 1182) ★★★★★
- JIMMY WITHERSPOON:** *EVENIN' BLUES* (Prestige 511 [P-7300]) ★★★★★
- JOE TURNER:** *BIG JOE RIDES AGAIN* (Atlantic 90668-1) ★★★★★½

KING CURTIS: *TROUBLE IN MIND* (Fantasy/Tru-Sound 512 [TRU-150001]) ★★★★★

MEMPHIS SLIM: *STEADY ROLLING BLUES* (Prestige/Bluesville 523 [BV-1075]) ★★★★★

Blues albums continue to be released at what is surely a record pace. Their variety is dazzling, with players of all ages, both black and white, mingling the blues of every region and era with soul, jazz, rock, country, r&b, Cajun, rockabilly, reggae, and anything else that strikes their fancy. The overall quality of musicianship and production is remarkably high; the garage-style amateurism and insensitive commercialism of the '60s and '70s have seemingly vanished. The blurring of racial and stylistic lines, the issue of authenticity becomes increasingly problematic; the more one hears, the more one suspects that there's no such thing as "pure" blues—if indeed there ever was.

There can be no question as to the authenticity of **Big Jack Johnson**, the Mississippi guitarist who, together with drummer Sam Carr, played on Frank Frost's '60s albums for Phillips International and Jewel. Frost, a protégé of Sonny Boy (Rice Miller) Williamson and Robert Nighthawk, was considered old-fashioned even then; by the late '70s, when his Clarksdale-based trio resurfaced on an Earwig LP as the Jelly Roll Kings, they were downright anachronistic. Recently the group performed to rave reviews in New York, and now Johnson has recorded his own album with Frost on piano and the brothers Ernest and Walter Roy on drums and bass, respectively.

On its surface, *The Oil Man* is raw Delta blues—charged with electricity and hard-rocking rhythms, but stylistically unadulterated. Closer inspection reveals a multitude of influences, from Howlin' Wolf and Muddy Waters to B.B. and Albert King, Johnnie Taylor, and Magic Sam; Johnson even works *Tom Dooley* and *Steel Guitar Rag* into his repertoire. But he makes it all his own, with barbed guitar licks and grainy vocals that resonate with eerie portent.

Lazy Lester's reputation rests on his harmonica work with Lightnin' Slim and his own swamp-blues sides for Excello Records in the late '50s and early '60s. Lately he's been making a strong comeback, with national tours and a new album—his first in nearly 30 years—recorded during his first-ever tour of England.

The British rhythm section on *Lazy Lester Rides Again* is a bit stiff but otherwise excellent, and Lester himself is in fine form. His harp work, while baldly derivative of Little Walter and Jimmy Reed, is spirited and forceful, but on Chicago-style material he's just so-so. When he re-creates such bayou oldies as *Sugar Coated Love* and *I Hear You Knockin'*, however, his contribution to classic south Louisiana rock & roll stands out in bold relief.

Florida-based tenor saxophonist **Noble "Thin Man" Watts** recorded with the Griffin Brothers and performed with Paul "Hucklebuck" Williams and Lionel Hampton before scoring a top-20 hit, *Hard Times*, in 1956. Subsequently he played in rock & roll package shows and eventually with the Apollo Theater house band before fading into obscurity. Rediscovered by bassist/producer Bob Greenlee, he joined Greenlee's brassy band, the Midnight Creepers, who back him on *Return Of The Thin Man*, for Greenlee's King Snake label. Watts' formerly Jacquet-like blowing has become smoother and lighter with the years, so that he now sounds more like King Curtis or, when he turns his hand to bebop, Stanley Turrentine. He's still a potent if unspectacular r&b honker, but here he's nearly overshadowed by the Creepers' punchy, modern, and consistently inventive mini-big-band charts.

Like Lazy Lester, **Raful Neal** hails from Baton Rouge and plays harmonica, and like Lester he presents a musical personality split between Chicago and Louisiana styles, with some contemporary soul-blues thrown in besides. Neal played with Buddy Guy in the '50s and recorded singles for Baton, Whit, and Fantastic through the early '80s; *Louisiana Legend*, produced for Fantastic in association with King Snake Records, is his debut LP. On soul tunes such as the Bobby Rush-like *Luberta* and the Jimmy Hughes standard *Steal Away*, he's accompanied by the Midnight Creepers, and on Slim Harpo's *No Cuttin' Loose* by Noble Watts' pungent tenor; but on most tracks he's backed by a tight, hornless rhythm section featuring his son Kenny Neal on lead guitar. Raful's vocals are crude but effective, and his harp is reminiscent of Harpo, Jimmy Reed, and Little Walter. The Neals' most frequent reference, though, is to the team of Junior Wells and Buddy Guy, whose style they've absorbed almost to the point of mimicry.

Kenny Neal also has his own new King Snake album, *Bio On The Bayou*. He recites his curriculum vitae on the title track: born in New Orleans, raised in Baton Rouge, taught harmonica by his father, played bass with Buddy Guy, and led his own band (including four of his brothers) as a guitarist. Here he plays both harp and guitar, accompanied by ex-child prodigy Lucky Peterson on keyboards and members of the Midnight Creepers on horns. He's a strong singer and a polished instrumentalist, but his style—though more modern than his father's—is strictly second-hand. Much of the album consists of brassy party blues, but Neal is more impressive on the spare, country-style *Early One Morning*.

Donald Kinsey is another guitar-slinging son of the blues. As a teenager he performed around Gary, Indiana, with his father, Lester "Big Daddy" Kinsey; later he toured and recorded with Albert King, Peter Tosh, and Bob Marley, and led his own heavy-metal and funk-reggae groups. Returning to Gary, he joined his brothers Kenneth and Ralph to accompany their father as the **Kinsey Report**. Without Big Daddy, the Kinsey Report recorded a single track for Alligator's collection *The New Bluebloods*, which they've followed up with a full album, *Edge Of The City*. Donald does all the singing, but it's his guitar that dazzles and dominates, spinning quicksilver rhapsodies out of keening Albert King-derived licks. The

material, nearly all original, is clever and contemporary, with topical lyrics and musical allusions to Hendrix and the Stones. The band is telepathically tight, and its impact is devastating.

Since arriving in Chicago from Missouri in 1942, tenor saxophonist **A.C. Reed** has worked with Willie Mabon, Earl Hooker, Buddy Guy, Son Seals, and Albert Collins, among others. He's led his own band for the last five years, specializing in gripping songs like *I Am Fed Up With This Music* and the title song to his new album, *I'm In The Wrong Business*. Reed says he means it, but you'd never guess from this solidly crafted, good-humored production. Stevie Ray Vaughan contributes a couple of smoke-curling solos, and Bonnie Raitt plays slide guitar and sings harmony with Reed on *She's Fine*. But Reed's original songs (including several remakes of previous recordings) are uneven in quality, and his definitively grainy horn is heard only sporadically.

Casey Jones is probably the most in-demand blues drummer on the current Chicago scene. His rock-solid rhythms have propelled the bands of Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, Freddie King, Otis Rush, and Koko Taylor, but he's best known for his long tenure with Albert Collins. *Solid Blue*, his second album as a leader, is a workman-like effort, but Jones' compositions are mostly reworked composites of blues and r&b warhorses by the likes of Otis

Rush, Jimmy Reed, and Little Willie John. His clear, high singing—pleasant but unexceptional—is agreeably buoyed by a youthful Chicago band that includes Maurice John Vaughn on guitar, Billy Branch on harmonica, and Allen Batts on keyboards.

The late **Eddie Taylor** was one of the finest rhythm guitarists the blues has produced. In his long career in Mississippi and Chicago, he worked with blues stars from Son House to Paul Butterfield, but his name is indelibly associated with the sides he cut with Jimmy Reed in the mid-'50s. *Still Not Ready For Eddie*, Taylor's last recording, reunites him with his early bandmates Snooky Pryor and Sunnyland Slim in a 1985 performance at Antone's in Austin, Texas. He sings his signature version of Johnnie Jones' *Big Town Playboy*—along with several Reed-like originals and Delta-style covers—in a plaintive, earnest voice, while Luther Tucker, a veteran of the Little Walter, Otis Rush, and James Cotton bands, handles most of the guitar work. Taylor seems ill-at-ease in the spotlight, content to yield center stage to Pryor's wailing harp.

Born in Bogalusa, Louisiana, Robert Lee Nelson learned harmonica from Lazy Lester, Slim Harpo, and his father, Versie Nelson. He spent the early '60s in Chicago, where he worked with Muddy and Wolf and picked up the moniker **Chicago Bob**, then moved on to Boston, Oakland (with John Lee Hooker), and



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Atlanta. On *Just Your Fool* he's backed by his Atlanta-based band, the **Shadows**, an all-white unit with a totally idiomatic grasp of the blues. Bob sings with bluff enthusiasm on material drawn from or influenced by Harpo, Little Walter, Magic Sam, and Buddy Guy, but his fluent harp playing is too hackneyed to sustain interest, leaving crack guitarist J.T. Speed to highlight the session.

Combining the urbanity of B.B. King with the earthiness of the Jelly Roll Kings, the **Hollywood All Stars'** second album, *Hard Hitting Blues From Memphis*, brings new luster to that city's tarnished reputation as a blues center. Formed in 1974 by veterans of various local soul and blues bands, the group takes its name from their home neighborhood in north-central Memphis. Lead singer and guitarist Ben Wilson's roughhewn B.B.-influenced style is deeply rooted in the country blues of his native Rosemark, Tennessee, an example of which is offered on *Going 'Cross The Bottom*. Gilmore Daniel, who died shortly before this album was completed, contributes a pair of hoarse vocals and some eccentric, sour-noted alto sax solos, while pianist William "Boogie Man" Hubbard, a Memphis legend, frolics on electric organ.

Dallas-based guitarist **Anson Funderburgh's** three previous Black Top LPs established him as an up-and-coming Texas blues-rockster. Teamed with veteran harmonica player

and vocalist Sam Myers, a former Elmore James sideman, he continues in a slick, solid blues groove on *Sins*. Funderburgh is an adept rhythm player whose glossy solos show the influence of all the Kings—B.B., Albert, Freddie, and Earl—plus Albert Collins and Gate-mouth Brown. Myers has an expressive, Albert King-like baritone and incisive harp sound derived from Sonny Boy Williamson, Little Walter, and Jimmy Reed. Though well-integrated and performed with almost awesome precision, the music lacks the emotional edge to match its technical sparkle.

Blue In The Face is a Connecticut-based band, led by guitarist Paul Gabriel and featuring vocalist Howard Eldridge, whose eponymous, self-produced debut LP creatively flavors blues with soul and rock. Gabriel displays considerable originality both as a songwriter and guitarist, recombining motifs from numerous sources to achieve a sound at once novel and familiar. Eldridge's singing is resonantly soulful, accommodating abruptly shifting styles and occasionally awkward lyrics with ease. On straight blues material the group sometimes lapses into clichés, but on genre-bending numbers like *Red Snake Boots* and *No Finance, No Romance*, they sound like some late-'60s band that should have been but never was.

San Francisco Bay Area slide guitarist **Roy Rogers** played with John Lee Hooker before striking out on his own. His first album consisted largely of Robert Johnson covers, but on *Slidewinder* he broadens his scope with rock-oriented originals and improvised folk-blues caprices. Although his voice is thin, his instrumental technique is prodigious, and he uses it for self-expression rather than imitation. He can still copy Johnson's style to near-perfection, and does so to accompany Hooker's guest vocal on *Terraplane Blues*, but he finds his greatest inspiration on a pair of uproarious duets with another notable drop-in, pianist Allen Toussaint.

The Paladins are a young Los Angeles rockabilly trio who, on their first, self-titled album, incorporate elements of blues, r&b, and Western swing into a rootsy repertoire of originals and obscure oldies. David Gonzalez' singing conveys the innocence and grit of vintage rockabilly, while his guitar shifts effortlessly from twangy country to keening blues. Thomas Yearsley, on upright bass, and Scott Campbell, on drums, pump out an energetic beat, but their sound, at least in the studio, lacks body, and their nonstop boogie-bop rhythms ultimately wear thin. Still, the Paladins are a lot less plastic than the Stray Cats, and it's not hard to see how they've built a reputation as an ace bar band.

Roy Buchanan's public career was simultaneously launched and nearly swamped in the tidal wave of publicity that attended the release of his first album in 1972. Not until he cut *When A Guitar Plays The Blues* for Alligator in 1985 did he finally live up to his early hype. The combination of Buchanan's pyrotechnic guitar and Delbert McClinton's singing made *Dancing On The Edge*, from '86, a hard act to follow, but *Hot Wires* manages to hold its own and then some. It features the same superb rhythm section—Donald Kinsey on rhythm guitar, Stan Szelest on keyboards, Larry Exum on bass, and Morris Jennings on drums—with

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guest vocals this time by Chicago soulster Johnny Sayles and newcomer Kanika Kress. Buchanan's virtuoso licks are less overtly psychedelic than on *Dancing*, but they're still mind-boggling, making up in searing intensity and quirky invention what they lack in down-home feeling.

The current crop of blues reissues is equally diverse. On those from the '50s and early '60s, jazz and r&b are the prevailing outside influences—the latter undertaken for commercial rather than nostalgic reasons. While they vary in instrumentation and artistic quality, they share a sonic beauty that present-day studios can't seem to duplicate. The vocals and instrumental solos have a warmer presence, set off by background textures that blend together in slightly soft focus. It remains to be seen whether today's more sharply etched sounds will age as gracefully.

The legend of **Guitar Slim** hangs on his 1954 smash, *The Things I Used To Do*, one of the most popular and influential songs in blues history. But from there his career slid quickly downhill, and he died in 1959 at the age of 32, having barely cut more than two albums' worth of material. His Specialty sides have long been available, but his late-'50s sessions for Atlantic's Atco subsidiary, which produced four unsuccessful singles, have remained in the can until now. The *Atco Sessions* contain

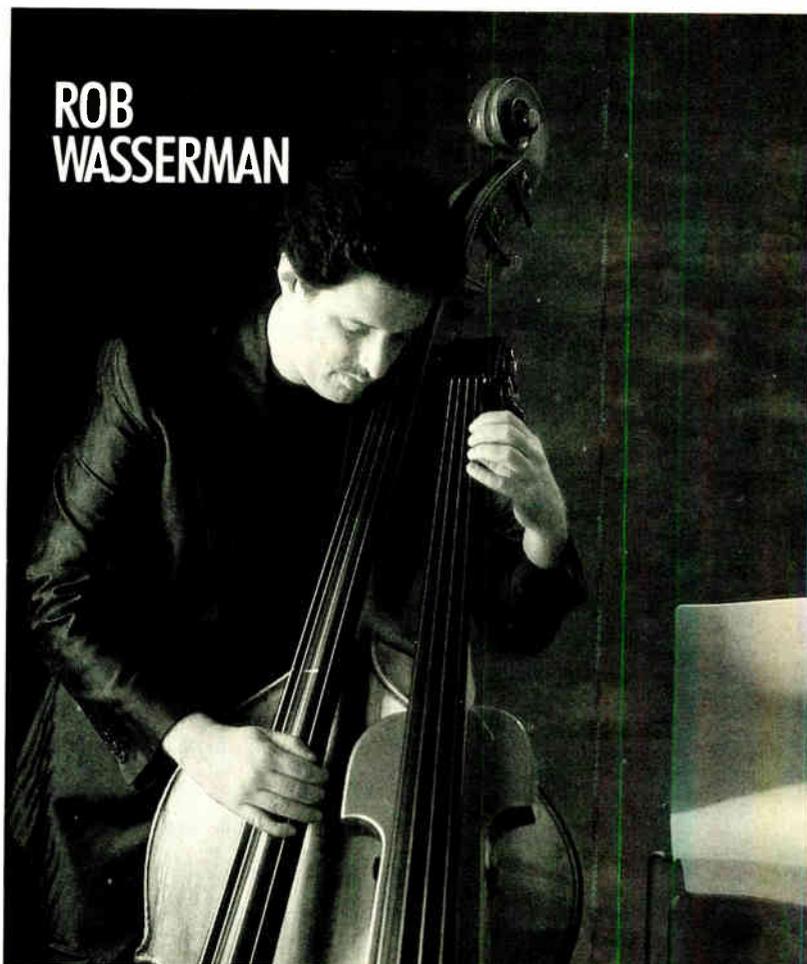
no undiscovered masterpieces—a couple of tracks are positively embarrassing—but they amply confirm Slim's reputation both as a singer and guitarist. Recorded in New Orleans and New York, they include blues, ballads, r&b, rock & roll, and pop novelties, as well as the inevitable knockoffs of *Things I Used To Do*. Slim's spare, edgy guitar work makes a strong case for understatement, and he sings even the most trivial tunes with rough aplomb.

Wilbert Harrison is almost exclusively known for his 1959 version of *Kansas City* (originally waxed by Little Willie Littlefield as *K.C. Lovin'*), though he did have a minor hit 10 years later with *Let's Work Together*. *Listen To My Song* collects his mid-'50s output for Savoy, where in a vain attempt to scale the charts he tackles everything from country to calypso, blues, rock, pop, and doo-wop—there's even a New Orleans-style rewrite of *Swanee River* backed by Harrison's own Bo Diddley-ish guitar. Much of the material is mediocre or worse, and Harrison's voice projects little personality, but there are some fascinating period arrangements and solos, including a priceless guitar break by Mickey Baker on *Confessin' My Dreams*.

A jazzy "shouter" in the mold of Jimmy Rushing and Big Joe Turner, **Jimmy Witherspoon** replaced Walter Brown in Jay McShann's band and cut a number-one hit, *Ain't*

Nobody's Business, in 1949. Unlike Big Joe, he failed to make the crossover to rock & roll and turned instead to the supper-club circuit. *Evenin' Blues*, a Prestige session from 1963, finds him performing in much the same vein as on his r&b dates, but in a more intimate quintet setting that features T-Bone Walker on guitar and Clifford Scott on tenor sax. Spoon himself is as laid-back as Perry Como but a lot more expressive; he's possibly the only singer who can croon and bawl at the same time.

Big Joe Turner was arguably the greatest male blues singer of them all. His recorded output was prolific and new reissues continue to appear, although his earliest, most historically significant sides are still out of print. *Big Joe Rides Again* is from 1960, by which time his primal rock & roll was passé and he had returned to the swing sounds of his youth. He's accompanied here by a stellar octet that includes Jim Hall on guitar, Vic Dickenson on trombone, and Coleman Hawkins on tenor sax; the elegant, slightly-too-sophisticated charts are by Ernie Wilkins, who arranged Joe Williams' hits with the Basie band. Big Joe is in magnificent voice on a set of mostly medium-tempo blues and ballads: every phrase is a throwaway gem. And though his classic *Rebecca* is set to an evenly-weighted bounce rhythm instead of a backbeat, it's still rock &



DUETS

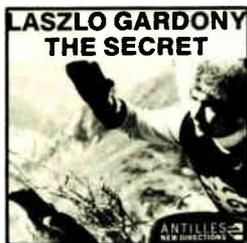
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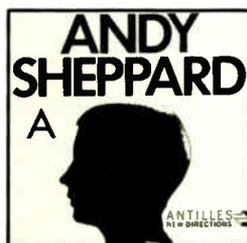
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Trouble In Mind, from 1961, isn't one of **King Curtis'** better-known albums—not surprisingly, since he puts his tenor sax aside to display his middling talents as a singer, alto saxophonist, and guitarist. The album contains familiar blues standards, r&b covers, and a few originals, but it all comes out sounding like ersatz Ray Charles. The band, Curtis' regular touring group, makes the most of a well-worn groove, and King stretches out on alto on a long instrumental, *Deep Fry*, but his few, brief tenor spots easily outshine everything else.

Memphis Slim, as the late Peter Chatman was known, spent his last 25 years in Europe,

where he helped inspire the British blues boom, while back in the U.S. his seminal contributions to the blues of Memphis and Chicago were virtually forgotten. His most important work was as a bandleader, but on *Steady Rolling Blues* he's presented as a solo pianist, organist, and singer—the better to market him to white audiences as a folk musician. Slim's authoritative blues and boogie piano preserves many of the older styles he picked up during his youthful wanderings around the South; his vibrant singing, too, seems to belong to the era of tent shows and barrelhouses. His organ playing, however, has little more than curiosity value. —db

New Releases

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

PRESTIGE: Willis Jackson Quintet, *Please Mr. Jackson*. Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis Quintet with Shirley Scott, *Jaws In Orbit*. Arnett Cobb, *Smooth Sailing*. Jack McDuff with Jimmy Forrest, *Tough 'Duff*. Oliver Nelson, *Soul Battle*. Jack McDuff and Gene Ammons, *Brother Jack Meets The Boss*. Red Holloway with the Brother Jack McDuff Quartet, *Cookin' Together*. Shirley Scott and Stanley Turrentine, *Blue Flames*. Richard "Groove" Holmes, *Soul Message*. Harold Mabern, *Rakin' And Scrapin'*. Rusty Bryant, *Rusty Bryant Returns*. Charles Earland, *Black Talk!* Billy Butler, *Guitar Soul!* Houston Person, *Goodness!* Charles Kynard, *Reelin' With The Feelin'*.

ATLANTIC JAZZ: Astor Piazzolla & Gary Burton, *The New Tango*. Mike Stern, *Time In Place*. Jane Harvey, *The Other Side Of Sondheim*. Joachim Kühn, *Situations*.

PASSPORT JAZZ: Arco Iris, *Peace Pipes*. Steve Kahn/Rob Mounsey, *Local Color*. Randy Brecker, *In The Idiom*.

LEO: Sun Ra, *Love In Outer Space*. Cecil Taylor Unit, *Live In Bologna*. Giancarlo Nicolai, *Vis music*. Akemi Kuniyoshi-Kuhn, *Motion-E-Motion*.

FLYING FISH: Robin Petrie & Danny Carnahan, *Continental Drift*. Paula Lockheart, *Voo-It*. Country Gazette, *Strictly Instrumental*. Jonathan Stevens, *Creationland*. Cathy Winter, *Travelling Home*.

CONTEMPORARY: Frank Morgan/McCoy Tyner Trio, *Major Changes*. George Robert/Tom Harrell Quintet, *Sun Dance*. The Jazztet, *Real Time*. Chris Connor, *New Again*.

Joshua Breakstone, *Evening Star*.

VIRGIN: Mark Isham, *Castalia*. Hans-Joachim Roedelius, *momenti felici*. Peter de Havilland, *Bois de Boulogne*. Dudu Pukwana, *In The Townships*. Itchy Fingers, *Quark*. Michael O' Sullivan, *The Dolphin's Way*. Various Artists, *Hurricane Zouk*. Various Artists, *Heartbeat Soukous*.

QUARTET: Ted Gioia Trio, *The End Of The Open Road*. Dave Bendigkeit Quartet, *Thoughts Of A Gentleman*. Mark Lewis Quartet, *In The Spirit*.

SHANACHIE: Alpha Blondy and the Wailers, *Jerusalem*. Ladysmith Black Mambazo, *Umthombo Wamanzi*. Augustus Pablo, *Rockers Comes East*. Yellowman, *Don't Burn It Down*. Boys of the Lough, *Sweet Rural Shade*.

MOUNTAIN RAILROAD: Various Artists, *Gathering At The Earl Of Old Town*. The Best of Mountain Railroad/Volume 1, *Folke Again*. Jim Kweskin & the Jug Band with Sippie Wallace and Otis Spann, *Jug Band Blues*.

RCA/BUEBIRD: Ruby Braff, *This Is My Lucky Day*. Various Artists, *Blue Montreux*. Sauter-Finegan Orchestra, *Directions In Music*. Ben Sidran, *That's Life I Guess*. Jimmy Rushing, *The You And Me That Used To Be*. Various Artists, *From The Newport Jazz Festival—Tribute To Charlie Parker*. Earl Hines Trio and Quartets, *Linger Awhile*. Various Artists, *At The Jazz Band Ball—Chicago! New York Dixieland* (CD only).

GREEN LINNET: Celtic Thunder, *The Light Of Other Days*. Matt Molly, *Stony Steps*. Buttons and Bows, *The First Month Of Summer*. #2 Patrick Street, *#2 Patrick Street*. La Bottine Souriante III, *Chic & Swell*. Eugene O'Donnell/James MacCafferty, *The Foggy Dew*. Séamus Connolly, *Nores From My Mind*.

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INDEPENDENTS: John Stubblefield, *Countin' On The Blues* (Enja). Paul Smoker, Ellery Eskelin, Drew Gress, Phil Haynes, *Joint Venture* (Enja). Nelson Rangell, *To Begin Again* (GAIA). Jeff Golub, *Unspoken Words* (GAIA). Mark Murphy, *September Ballads* (Milestone). Amina Claudine Myers, *Amina* (RCA Novus). Pointer Sisters, *Serious Slammin'* (RCA). Nancy Kelly, *Live Jazz* (Amherst). Eddie Daniels, *Memos From Paradise* (GRP). Special EFX, *Double Feature* (GRP). Richard Teitelbaum/Carlos Zingaro, *The Sea Between* (Victo). Bobby McFerrin, *Simple Pleasures* (EMI-Manhattan). Baritone Madness, *Heavy Berries* (Swingmaster). Frans Vermeerssen, *All Ears* (Swingmaster). Stephan Micus, *Twilight Fields* (ECM). Steve Tibbetts, *Yr* (ECM). Battlefield Band, *Celtic Hotel* (Temple). Glenn Horiuchi, *Next Step* (AsianImpro). Biota, *Tinct* (Recommended). Fred Simon, *Usually, Always* (Windham Hill). Tuck and Patti, *Tears Of Joy* (Windham Hill). Tim Story, *Untitled* (Lost Lake Arts). Modern Mandolin Quartet, *Modern Mandolin Quartet* (Lost Lake Arts). Jack Walrath & Spirit Level, *Killer Bunnies* (Spotlite). Jed Levy, *Good People*

(Reservoir). David Borden/Mother Mallard, *Migration* (Rune). Guus Janssen Septet, *85...86* (Claxon). Various Artists, *Detroit Blues Factory Volume 1* (Blues Factory). Phil Miller, *Cutting Both Ways* (Cuneiform). Monks of Doom, Soundtrack to the Film *Breakfast On The Beach Of Deception* (Pitch-A-Tent). Joe Pass/Tommy Gumina Trio, *Sound Project* (Polytone). Gospel Warriors, *Over 50 Years Of Great Gospel Performances* (Spirit Feel). *Chicago Gospel Pioneers*, Various Artists (Spirit Feel). Buddy DeFranco with Al Raymond's All Star Big Jazz Band, *Born To Swing* (Star Satellite). Jim Snidero Quintet, *Mixed Bag* (Criss Cross). Ellyn Rucker, *Ellyn* (Capri). Point of No Return, *Crossing Point* (Optimism). Janet Grice, *Song For Andy* (Optimism). Tracy Chapman, *Tracy Chapman* (Elektra). Bob Wills and his Texas Playboys, *The Tiffany Transcriptions Vol. 7* (Kaleidoscope). The Bears, *Rise And Shine* (IRS). Sotavento, *Cuicani* (Redwood). Space Ship Love, *Out At Last* (Tee-Ni-Chee). Neil Young & the BlueNotes, *This Note's For You* (Reprise). Suzanne Dean, *Dreams Come True* (Nova). Various Artists, *Salt City Blues* (Blue Wave). Various Artists, *Keep The Dream Alive—A*

Tribute To Mayor Harold Washington (ECO). Billie Holiday, *Last Recording* (Verve). Paolo Radoni, *Storie Vere* (Igloo). WVXU-Jazz, *A Slice Of Live Volume 1* (WVXU-FM). James Williams with Ray Brown & Art Blakey, *Magical Trio 1* (Emarcy). Ray Bryant, *Trio Today* (Emarcy). Lou Harrison, *La Koro Sutro*, (New Albion). Ashley Alexander Big Band, *Secret Love* (AM-PM). Sam Riney, *Lay It On The Line* (Spindletop). Jim Brock, *Pasajes* (MBIRA). Duke Ellington & His Famous Orchestra, *Happy-Go-Lucky Local* (Musicraft). June Christy with the Lou Levy Sextet, *Impromptu* (Discovery). Earl Hines, *Plays Duke Ellington* (New World). Courtney Pine, *Destiny's Song & The Image Of Pursuance* (Antilles/New Directions).

MAIL ORDER SOURCES

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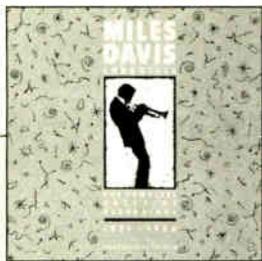
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MILES DAVIS

CHRONICLE: THE COMPLETE PRESTIGE RECORDINGS, 1951-1956—Prestige 012-2: 94 tunes recorded in 17 sessions from January 17, 1951 to October 26, 1956.

Personnel: Davis, trumpet, piano (on I Know); with 34 musicians including Charlie Parker, Lee Konitz, J.J. Johnson, Thelonious Monk, Horace Silver, Charles Mingus, Art Blakey, and Max Roach.

★★★★★

One of the great joys in exploring the recorded history of jazz is discovering (or re-discovering) the work of Miles Davis in the 1950s. He entered the decade triumphantly, fresh from his work with Charlie Parker and the "Birth of the Cool" band. Then, from 1951 to 1953, he slumped, recording only sporadically while he fought personal and artistic demons.

By the spring of 1954, Miles was revitalized. The triumph of *Walkin'* marked the beginning of an incredible period of creative activity that culminated in the landmark sessions on May 11 and October 26, 1956. On those two days, the great Miles Davis Quintet—with John Coltrane (tenor sax), Red Garland (piano), Paul Chambers (bass), and Philly Joe Jones (drums)—recorded 26 tunes. They were later released on four classic Prestige albums: *Cookin'*, *Relaxin'*, *Workin'*, and *Steamin'*.

While virtually all of the Prestige material has been in print since its initial release, the new Compact Disc Edition of *Chronicle* is an elegant and impressive repackaging of this essential music. For the first time, all the tunes are presented in chronological order. (I should say *almost* all, since one session was moved so all the Quintet selections would be together.)

The music fills eight compact discs, the shortest of which has a full hour of music. The first disc opens with a January, 1951 session that included a young, tentative Sonny Rollins, and the next four trace the dips and swirls of Miles' career up to the formation of the Quintet in late '55. The last three discs have the first 32 tunes cut by the Quintet before they moved on to Columbia Records.

The package includes the superb essay and session-by-session analysis written by Dan Morgenstern for the 1980 LP version of *Chronicle*. Curiously, Morgenstern's notes still include a reference to LP sequencing problems. Considering the care which was obviously taken in assembling this set, a little editing of the notes would have been nice—but that's a very minor quibble.

There is little to complain about with the sound quality. Some of the earliest cuts are still scratchy and tinny, but in general the

improvement over the old albums is remarkable. As is usually the case with well-done CD remasterings, the music reveals details that were previously hidden by LP background noise.

I had a wonderful time doing A/B comparisons of cuts. A few notes: On *Solar* (and elsewhere), the change in the timbre of Miles' muted trumpet is startling. It has a clarity—a "bite" to the attack—that I'd never heard before, yet it's also rounder and deeper. On the LP versions of *Bag's Groove* (both takes), Milt Jackson's vibraphone sounds muffled and distant. Here, the vibes have a bright, crisp edge and a bell-like tone. The sound of the drums everywhere is much improved, especially when they're played with brushes. Philly Joe Jones still sounds as if he's playing on cardboard boxes sometimes—but at least they don't sound like soggy cardboard boxes.

The one tune where I was most amazed was the '56 Quintet version of *Oleo*. The peekaboo arrangement—with instruments entering and dropping out in various combinations—lets the tone of each player shine through. On the CD, everything is more sharply etched. Miles is smooth and stealthy, Coltrane urgent (but certainly not harsh), Garland as fluid as Sugar Ray. Best of all is the sound of Paul Chambers' bass: full, rich, and resonant, with a percussive edge that's completely missing on the LP.

It should be noted that these comparisons are not entirely fair. Some of my old Miles Davis LPs are pretty beat-up from repeated playings. But that's another thing that makes it so reassuring to have this package on the shelf: No matter how many times I play these shiny little discs, they aren't going to wear out. That's true of all CDs, of course—but with music this good and this important, it's very significant.

—jim roberts



ART BLAKEY'S JAZZ MESSENGERS

1958/PARIS OLYMPIA—Fontana 832 659-2: *JUST BY MYSELF*; *I REMEMBER CLIFFORD*; *ARE YOU REAL*; *MOANIN'*; *JUSTICE*; *BLUES MARCH*; *WHISPER NOT*. (57:38 minutes)

Personnel: Blakey, drums; Lee Morgan, trumpet; Benny Golson, tenor saxophone; Bobby Timmons, piano; Jimmy Merritt, bass.

★★★½

PARIS JAM SESSION—Fontana 832 692-2: *DANCE OF THE INFIDELS*; *BOUNCING WITH BUD*; *THE*

MIDGET; *A NIGHT IN TUNISIA*. (42:17 minutes)

Personnel: Blakey, drums; Lee Morgan, trumpet; Barney Wilen, alto saxophone (cuts 1, 2); Wayne Shorter, tenor saxophone; Bud Powell (1, 2), Walter Davis Jr. (3, 4), piano; Jimmy Merritt, bass.

★★★★

The persistent magic of the Jazz Messengers over their 34-year (and counting) history is that, despite the periodic turnover in personnel, each edition created an individual personality but meanwhile maintained a consistent identity, which remains constant regardless of changing fad or fashion. If the lineup which headman Blakey brought to Paris in the fall of 1958 lacked some of the stylistic flexibility of later groupings, they nevertheless revealed particular improvisatory strengths—Lee Morgan's fiery aggression and measured lyricism, pianist Timmons' soulful solidity (in small doses), and Blakey's own propulsive power.

Blakey has always delegated arranging duties to a musical director, though, in this case the proficient Benny Golson. Perhaps due to the consistent quality of his writing (both here—five of the seven pieces are from his pen—and subsequently with his popular Jazztet, co-led with Art Farmer) Golson's skills as a tenor saxist have been overlooked, and here he makes the concert's best impression, with an attractively skewed attack, slinking through the bluesy *Moanin'* (bolstered by Blakey's backbeat) and snorting through the up-tempo romps *Just By Myself* and *Justice* (the original title for Monk's *Evidence*). Elsewhere, Timmons provides a suave, silky solo on *Whisper Not*; Morgan seems at only half of his considerable capacity—his showcase, *I Remember Clifford*, is serviceable if not inspired.

But, as always, it's Blakey manning the temperature gauge, alternately fanning the flame and cooling things down (hear the way he does both on *Justice*). Unfortunately, the CD balance puts his drums a touch too much in the forefront (with one ugly crash cymbal a particular culprit), sometimes obscuring the front line.

Exactly one year later the Messengers returned to tour France (with Walter Davis Jr. replacing Timmons and Wayne Shorter in for Golson). *Paris Jam Session*, recorded at the end of their sojourn, really only halfway lives up to its billing—two tunes add expatriate Bud Powell and local reed rave Barney Wilen, but the remaining pair are handled by the Messengers intact.

One benefit of the ad hoc situation is an increase in the energy level. Morgan struts his stuff with abandon, and Blakey bashes like a man possessed—he threatens to overwhelm his cohorts during *Dance Of The Infidels'* ferocious round of fours, and his multi-layered rhythms electrify *Night In Tunisia*. Bud sounds for the most part strong and dependable on his two tunes, all but throwing away brilliant fills that would handcuff normal pianists, but there are also a few spots where his mind outruns his fingers.

As a European favorite who never received much recognition in the States, Wilen's appearance is of interest. Though he had re-

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CTI GOES CD

By Herb Nolan

In the 1970s, Creed Taylor's CTI Records probably did more than any other label of that time to package jazz for a mass audience. The label assembled a cast of all-star players and produced and promoted their music aggressively.

Among the players that CTI pushed toward super stardom were George Benson, Stanley Turrentine, Freddie Hubbard, and Ron Carter. They are all musicians who continue to have an impact on popular music.

Interestingly, much of the CTI product was knocked out in two- and three-day recording sessions at Rudy Van Gelder's New Jersey studio, giving each recording, in many instances, a spontaneous edge coupled with the attention to sound that has made Van Gelder legendary, especially when it comes to jazz.

Guitar players lead the list in this CTI batch released through CBS. Most of the

CDs contain previously unreleased material and/or alternate takes.

In 1971, when *Beyond The Blue Horizon* (ZK40810, 43:41) was recorded, **George Benson**, for better or for worse, was being marketed as the new Wes Montgomery. That baggage often had him being produced for that kind of sound. *Blue Horizon*, however, lets George Benson be George Benson. With Clarence Palmer on organ, Ron Carter, bass, and Jack DeJohnette on drums, the setting is a familiar one. The guitarist's creative and technical virtuosity are free to roam through such material as the atmospheric *Somewhere In The East* and his compelling ballad *Ode To Kudu*. *Kudu* and *All Clear* on this CD are previously unreleased alternates.

Kenny Burrell, another guitarist of equal creative and technical talent, and whose *Guitar Forms* with Gil Evans was a landmark guitar recording, cut *God Bless The Child* (ZK40808, 42:40) with CTI all-stars Ron Carter, Freddie Hubbard, Hubert Laws, and Billy Cobham—along with polyrhythmic support from Ray Barretto and a young Airto—and strings by Don Sebesky. The music is eclectic, from the

elaborate Sebesky rendering of Thad Jones' lovely *A Child Is Born to Love Is The Answer*, which builds in electric intensity. Here the compact disc brings out the brightness of Airto's percussive colorations. This CD includes two previously unreleased solo guitar tracks, *Ballad Of The Sad Young Men* and Kurt Weill's *Lost In The Stars*.

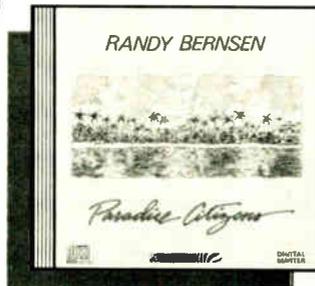
Jim Hall is an elegant and graceful guitar player. Nurtured in the innovative ensembles of Chico Hamilton and Jimmy Guiffre, which broadened the guitar player's role as a substitute for the piano, he developed a rich, lyrical, subtle style often associated with the West Coast jazz players. *Concierto* (ZK40807, 49:49) features two major figures from that "school," Paul Desmond and Chet Baker, along with Steve Gadd, Ron Carter, Don Sebesky, and on one alternate track, Roland Hanna. Among the highlights is a 19-plus-minute version of Joaquin Rodrigo's *Concierto de Aranjuez*. Added to the CD version is the Ellington/Strayhorn *Rock Skippin'*.

At the same time, both Baker and Desmond recorded for CTI as leaders.

Chet Baker's *She Was Too Good To Me*

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Paradise



F O U N D !

RANDY BERNSEN'S MUSICAL WORLD OF "PARADISE CITIZENS"

Florida, in addition to its idyllic climate, has also provided an equally stimulating climate for creativity. Guitarist/writer/producer Randy Bernsen certainly is the brightest star now rising from the sunshine state. Randy assembles an unbelievable "who's who" for his newest release; major talents including Wayne Shorter, Bruce Hornsby, Marcus Miller, Michael Hedges, Steve Gadd and the late Jaco Pastorius. Highlights of "Paradise Citizens" are "Be Still and Know," "Continuum" (by Jaco) and "Open Invitation" among a release chock-full of surprise and delight! CD also includes a bonus track (and title piece)—an intriguing collage/tribute to Jaco's genius.

ALSO BY RANDY BERNSEN: "MUSIC FOR PLANETS, PEOPLE AND WASHING MACHINES," "MO' WASABI"

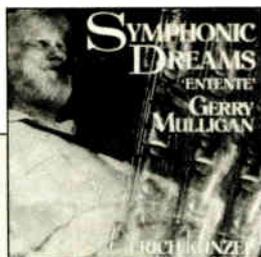
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 DIGITAL MASTER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 40

corded (and toured) on tenor sax with Miles Davis in 1957, he here sticks to alto, with a tone approaching Jackie McLean's biting edge, but a rather conservative rhythmic attitude—especially in comparison to Shorter's unfettered phrasing.

The sound on this CD is a bit brighter than 1958/Paris Olympia—neither will win any audiophile awards, but both clearly convey the message from Blakey's broods. —art lange



GERRY MULLIGAN

SYMPHONIC DREAMS—Pro Acoustic Recording CDP 703: *ENTENTE FOR BARITONE SAX AND ORCHESTRA; THE SAX CHRONICLES PART 1: SUN ON THE BACH STAIRS, SAX IN DEBUSSY'S GARDEN, SAX IN MOZART'S MINOR, SAX AND THE RITE OF IGOR; SONG FOR STRAYHORN; THE SAX CHRONICLES PART 2: SAX AND DER ROSENKAVALIER, SAX ON THE RHINE, A WALK WITH BRAHMS; K-4 PACIFIC.* (52:04 minutes)

Personnel: Mulligan, baritone saxophone; Erich Kunzel, conductor, Houston Symphony; others unlisted.

★ ★ ★

Gerry Mulligan has made the sort of album every jazz musician seems to want to do at least once. He's tried to mix the linguistics of jazz with the grammar of the symphony. Although he hasn't managed to reconcile their polarities, he's still produced an attractive collection of Third Stream exercises that, among other things, cast some original Mulligan tunes in the manner of Bach, Mozart, Debussy, Brahms, and Stravinsky.

This is the musical business of the *Sax Chronicles, Part 1 And 2*. Harry Freedman's graceful orchestrations become affectionate parodies of some of the masters' trademarks, but without the sting of satire (i.e., nothing so bold as Alec Tempelton's famous swing caricature of the Baroque, *Bach Goes To Town*). The real purpose here seems to be to imagine what role the baritone might have had had it been born in the 17th or 18th century. How might Strauss have cast a waltz for baritone and soprano (*Rosenkavalier*)? Or how would the baritone have fared as an instrument of French impressionism (*Debussy's Garden*)? There is a neat irony, however, in the fact that the elements of modern jazz find their most hospitable accommodation in the oldest of idioms—Bach.

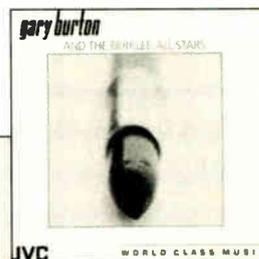
A more straightfaced tribute is Mulligan's lyrical *Song For Strayhorn*, which borrows nothing from Ellington's famous alter ego, Billy Strayhorn. Here the Symphonic element is relatively restrained, a subtle ambiance around what is essentially a theme for baritone.

For Mulligan the centerpiece of the album is his own *Entente For Baritone Sax And Orchestra*. It's worth mentioning that "entente" is not a musical term, but a diplomatic one meaning an "understanding" between two nations. Mulligan's understanding, as he says in a brief program note, is intended as an understanding between a "solo instrument from jazz and the symphony"—not jazz itself and the symphony.

The work is based on two themes, the first a contemplative minor key melody which Mulligan's orchestration frames in a quiet elegance,

and occasionally punctuates with a bit of bombast. A second theme turns up about a third of the way through and extends the mood of the first. Then Mulligan fires off a series of breaks and launches into an uptempo improvisation. The piece closes with a reprise of the first theme, almost as a coda. Overall, it's an attractive and unpretentious work. Given its modest intent, one doesn't need to invoke pompous jargon in discussing its structural limitations. They're not the point.

—john mcdonough



GARY BURTON

GARY BURTON AND THE BERKLEE ALL-STARS—JVC-JD 3301: *FAT LADY; SOULFUL BILL; FIRM ROOTS; CORAL; WHY'D YOU DO IT?; INNER VOYAGE; FIRST MEMORY; THE BLUES WALK; CRYSTAL SILENCE.* (52:47 minutes)

Personnel: Burton, vibraphone; Bill Pierce, tenor saxophone; Larry Monroe, alto saxophone; Jeff Stout, trumpet, flugelhorn; Jim Kelly, electric guitar; Orville Wright, piano; Bruce Gertz, electric bass; Tommy Campbell, drums.

★ ★ ★

This easygoing and lightweight studio date between colleagues at America's most prestigious music college took place toward the end of summer school in Tokyo (7/85) after a few live appearances at Pitt Inn and Derby Square. It's a rare chance to hear some of the talented teachers of jazz youth international, in a setting that might happen only once or twice a year at Berklee's own Performance Center.

Jim Kelly turns in clean and lively solos on several tracks, much in the Abercrombie and Scofield styles. Jeff Stout blows understatedly on *Coral*, and brings a brisk, muted chorus or two to Brownie's *Blues Walk*; Larry Monroe gets a few nice licks in on *Firm Roots*; I've heard both to better advantage around Boston. Two Berklee composers are represented: trumpeter/big band leader Greg Hopkins and drummer Ted Pease. Hopkins' modernistic *Inner Voyage* has a slightly sensational duo by Burton and Campbell, heard often with Sonny Rollins, as well as an agile chorus from Gertz, who works aplenty with Gerry Bergonzi; Pease's *First Memory* pairs Pierce and Burton nicely.

Burton, of course, needs no introduction, but this is an unusually relaxed appearance away from his own youthful, highstrung bands. He's right up front on *Fat Lady*, works a James Williams' bluesy waltz (dedicated to his friend Bill Pierce) as a nice ride with rhythm, and

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(ZK40804, 40:54) was recorded in 1974 with Desmond, Hubert Laws, and orchestra. The CD enhances the lyric richness of Baker's soft trumpet tone and the haunting quality of Baker's vocals. The title track is almost mystic. The material ranges from *Autumn Leaves* to Hank Mobley's *Funk In The Deep Freeze*. Reportedly this was the first time Desmond and Baker had recorded together, and the two compliment each other beautifully. The CD contains one previously unreleased track.

Pure Desmond (ZK40806, 46:10) a quartet session—with guitarist Ed Bickert, the ubiquitous Ron Carter, and Connie Kay on drums—is a reminder that **Paul**

Desmond was jazz's premier lyricist. With Bickert, Carter, and Kay working together in precision, Desmond's alto is light and lyric. Recorded in two days in 1974, the CD version includes two unreleased tracks, Antonio Carlos Jobim's *Wave* and *The Theme From M.A.S.H.* There's also an alternate of Django Reinhardt's *Nuages*. The music is masterfully crafted.

When **Stanley Turrentine** recorded *Sugar* (ZK40811, 44:46) in 1970 he was beginning to sell like a pop star. His big tenor sound—blending Gene Ammons, Coleman Hawkins, and the dues paid in the bar-walking traveling bands of Lowell Fulson and Earl Bostic—had a raucous, emotional quality distinctly his own. He is a master of building tension to just the emotional peak before letting it break loose. On *Sugar* Stanley is aided and abetted by Freddie Hubbard, George Benson, Lonnie Liston Smith, and Ron Carter. Among the highlights is a 14-minute blues-funk *Impressions*. The CD contains one previously unreleased track.

Hank Crawford comes out of that same blues milieu. His alto sound was nurtured in bands led by Ray Charles. Heavily arranged by Bob James, *We Got A Good Thing Going* (ZK40820, 53:48) seems programmed for the juke box. Containing 13 tracks (four of them previously unreleased), the music is quite easy on the soul.

More aggressive in a jazz-rock mold is the **Joe Beck/David Sanborn** collaboration *Beck & Sanborn* (ZK40805, 50:09) with bassist Will Lee, keyboardist Don Grolnick, and occasional strings. Recorded in 1975, these two were young turks on the New York scene. It's the sound that this CD captures that everyone was after. It contains two previously unreleased tracks.

Red Clay (ZK40809, 49:28) was **Freddie Hubbard's** first CTI album. With Herbie Hancock on electric keyboards, Joe Henderson on tenor, and being driven by Ron Carter and Lenny White, the music was fierce. Henderson and Hubbard breathe fire on a series of Hubbard's compositions. The one track not penned by the leader is an unreleased addition to the CD, a 10-plus-minute version of John Lennon's *Cold Turkey*.



Freddie Hubbard

MITCHELL SEIDEL

Organist **Johnny Hammond**, who recorded for CTI's subsidiary label Kudu, put together a jazz-funk-soul romp in 1973 titled *Higher Ground* (ZK40692, 37:06). With big band backing, it is reminiscent of the Jimmy Smith/Oliver Nelson collaborations a decade earlier. With soloists George Benson, Joe Henderson, and Hank Crawford, the music hits a groove and stays there. Although not one of the four or five major jazz organ innovators, Hammond plays out of a Jimmy Smith mold with relentless authority.

On the mellow side is **Ron Carter's**

Spanish Blue (ZK40803, 34:05) with Roland Hanna, Hubert Laws, and Billy Cobham. Two Carter compositions, *El Noche Sol* and *Sabado Sumbbrero*, add to the Spanish flavor of *Blue*, which also contains an interesting reworking of Miles' *So What* and a funk-beat piece by Carter titled *Arkansas*. Laws plays elegantly on *Sombbrero*.

Equally mellow—or "new ageish"—is **Hubert Law's** *San Francisco Concert*, (ZK40819, 64:36) actually recorded at the Paramount Theatre in Oakland, CA. The classically trained flutist with a brilliant tone is showcased in an orchestral setting. Most of the arrangements are by Bob James. The CD includes four previously unreleased tracks, including Erik Satie's *Gymnopedie* and a John Murtaugh arrangement of Clare Fischer's *Pensariva*.

Similarly, **Milt Jackson's** *Sun Flower* (ZK40800, 41:48) is a subdued, easy listening session with some fine solo work by Hancock, Hubbard, and Carter. Heavily produced, the CD release adds Milt Jackson's SKG from his *Goodbye* album with Hubert Laws.

When first released, CTI recordings sold extremely well and reached a wide audience. Re-released on compact disc, generally with new material, they stand the test of time.

db

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 42

gets *Crystal Silence* as a solo sendoff. Combo shouters like *Fat Lady* and *Blues Walk* bring forth comfortable solos, notably from Pierce and Wright. Pierce, whose regal, slightly mournful sound became familiar with Art Blakey, is a frequent flier with Freddie Hubbard; Wright is an older Trinidadian with young ideas. A few charts are by Bob Friedman.

So is there a "Berklee sound"? Not so's you'd notice. A similar cross-section of Berklee faculty will head back to Hamamatsu, Japan this summer; betcha they make another album.

—fred bouchard



COUNT BASIE

BASIE IN LONDON—Verve 833 805-2: *JUMPIN' AT THE WOODSIDE; SHINY STOCKINGS; HOW HIGH THE MOON; NAILS; FLUTE JUICE; ONE O'CLOCK JUMP; ALRIGHT, OKAY YOU WIN; ROLL 'EM PETE; THE COMEBACK; BLUES BACKSTAGE; CORNER POCKET; BLEE BLOP BLUES; YESTERDAYS*; UNTITLED*; SIXTEEN MEN SWINGING*; PLYMOUTH ROCK**. (62:22 minutes) (*Additional previously unreleased track on CD only.)

Personnel: Reunald Jones, Thad Jones, Joe Newman, Wendell Culley, trumpet; Benny Powell, Henry Coker, Matthew Gee, trombone; Marshall Royal, Bill Graham, alto saxophone; Frank Foster, tenor saxophone; Srank Wess, tenor saxophone and flute; Charlie Fowlkes, baritone saxophone; Basie, piano; Freddie Green, guitar; Eddie Jones, bass; Sonny Payne, drums; Joe Williams, vocals (cuts 7-9).

★★★★★

GENE HARRIS

THE GENE HARRIS BIG BAND: TRIBUTE TO COUNT BASIE—Concord Jazz 4337: *CAPTAIN BILL; NIGHT MIST BLUES; SWINGIN' THE BLUES; WHEN DID YOU LEAVE HEAVEN; BLUES FOR PEPPER; BLUE AND SENTIMENTAL; RILED UP; THE MASQUERADE IS OVER; DEJECTION BLUES*. (46:52 minutes)

Collective Personnel: Jon Faddis, Snooky Young, Conte Candoli, Frank Szabo, Bobby Bryant, trumpet; Charlie Loper, Bill Watrous, Thurman Green, Garnett Brown, Bill Reichenbach, trombone; Marshall Royal, Bill Green, Jackie Kelso, alto saxophone; Bob Cooper, Plas Johnson, tenor saxophone; Jack Nimitz, baritone saxophone; Harris, piano; Herb Ellis, guitar; Ray Brown, James Leary, bass; Jeff Hamilton, drums.

★★★½

There are probably many who would agree that, despite shifting personnels over the past 50 years, Count Basie has really only had two, or, at the most, three bands in his entire career as leader. First, there was the classic aggregation of innovative soloists and sectional sparks that literally defined the band from its emergence in the mid-'30s to its demise in the doldrum years following World War II. Then, after a brief but musically rewarding period with smaller combos, Basie re-entered the fray with what ultimately took shape, in the mid-'50s, as the orchestra heard on the album listed above. However, the last 30 years of continued leadership of perhaps the most consistently swinging large orchestra in jazz history have, in actuality, displayed little more than an unvarying repetition of "one more times." Foot-tapping and finger-popping, yes, oh yes! But thought-provoking or everlastingly memorable, hardly not—at least not in the same sense as all of those immortal glory day sides with Pres, Buck, Sweets, Dicky, and Herschel.

Certainly, it was recognized in the '50s that the whole emphasis in Basiedom had veered from free-wheeling solos and communally-crafted heads, which might have only taken final shape after weeks of one-nighter experimental refinings, to what, from the '50s on, became virtually an arranger's band, one that was tightly rehearsed in all of the nuances of sectional phrasing, but yet one that was also capable of providing—in magical, show business terms—the illusion of inspiration and the aura of spontaneity. This, in itself, is no mean trick, as every professional performer knows. But we also know that, through much handling night after night, even the most highly polished veneer can wear thin over time.

In 1956, though, when the "swing machine" concept was still new to Basie and his primarily young band, ennui had certainly not yet had time to set in. As a consequence, this album (which was recorded not in London but at a concert in Gothenburg, Sweden on September 7) reflects all of the best qualities of Basie's shift in emphasis. To be sure, the charts are more the thing now than previously, but there are still solos galore by such burgeoning bop-inspired players as Thad and Joe, Benny, and the two Franks. Royal is, of course, as majestic as ever in his firm, singing alto lead, while Basie is Basie throughout.

The mind boggles at the possible number of Basie imitations, recreations, and memorials that have been issued on record, not only since the master's death but also as far back as the late '30s, when his deceptively simple approach to swing first began to attract widespread attention. There is no question that his pianistic style—at least on the surface—offered greater accessibility to players not sufficiently equipped to tackle the imposing burdens implicit in the more florid and technically demanding styles of Hines, Tatum, Waller, and Wilson. But, unfortunately, most imitators stopped right there—at the surface—and failed to capture the innate swinging grace evident in even the sparest of his phrases.

Wisely, Gene Harris does not try to imitate Basie's touch. He plays Basie in his own way, which, in effect, seems to suggest an amalgam of early Horace Silver, Hampton Hawes, and perhaps even Ramsey Lewis. Overall, his solo

approach emerges as being articulately funky in the fashion of the '50s, and not at all unpleasant to listen to. Other soloists include Faddis, Candoli, Watrous, Cooper, Johnson, and Brown. This is a good album to hear, but only after one has already thoroughly digested the entirety of the original Basie canon.

—jack sohmer



JOHN ZORN

SPILLANE—Elektra/Nonesuch 9 79172-2: *SPILLANE; TWO-LANE HIGHWAY; FORBIDDEN FRUIT*. (54:01 minutes)

Personnel: *Cut 1:* Zorn, alto saxophone, clarinet; Anthony Coleman, piano, organ, celeste; David Weinstein, sampling keyboards, celeste; Bob James, tapes, compact discs; Carol Emanuel, harp; Bill Frisell, guitar; David Hofstra, bass, tuba; Bobby Previte, drums, percussion; Jim Staley, trombone; John Lurie, Robert Quine, voices. *Cut 2:* Albert Collins, guitar, voice; Robert Quine, guitar; Big John Patton, organ; Wayne Horvitz, piano, keyboards; Melvin Gibbs, bass; Ronald Shannon Jackson, drums; Bobby Previte, drums, percussion. *Cut 3:* Kronos String Quartet; Christian Marclay, turntables; Ohta Hiromi, voice.

★★★★★

NEWS FOR LULU—hat Art CD 6005: *K.D.'S MOTION; FUNK IN DEEP FREEZE; MELANIE; MELODY FOR C; LOTUS BLOSSOM; EASTERN INCIDENT; PECKIN' TIME; BLUES BLUES BLUES; BLUE MINOR (Take 1); THIS I DIG OF YOU; VENITA'S DANCE; NEWS FOR LULU; OLE; SONNY'S CRIB; HANK'S OTHER TUNE; BLUE MINOR (Take 2); WINDMILL; NEWS FOR LULU (Live Alternate Take); FUNK IN DEEP FREEZE (Live Alternate Take); WINDMILL (Live Alternate Take)*. (73:48 minutes)

Personnel: Zorn, alto saxophone; George Lewis, trombone; Bill Frisell, guitar.

★★★★★

Two faces of the polycephalous John Zorn are on display on this pair of CD releases. *Spillane* offers three remarkably varied views of Zorn The Composer; *News For Lulu* features Zorn The Hot Alto Saxist And Jazz Renegade.

As a composer, Zorn's interest in speed and juxtaposition—rapidly changing episodes of often wildly disparate character—has been put to the test in pieces ranging from for-the-most-part spontaneously improvised ("game theory" works like *Archery* [Parachute 17/18] and *Cobra* [hat Art 2034]) to the more artfully collagistic assemblages like *Godard* (Nato 634)]. *Spillane* falls closer to the latter category.

HE TOOK 5 TO GIVE YOU A 10

A fascinating *jazz noir* concoction of ambient noise (thunder, windshield wipers wooshing, a ticking clock) and '50s *Peter Gunn*-style hip soundtrack music, *Spillane* is ultimately cinematic thanks to its powerfully atmospheric aural images—for example, the strip joint episode, with a bump-and-grind/*Night Train* tenor and whoopingly enthusiastic patrons. The music's quick cutting reinforces the narrator's hallucinatory rap of danger, depression, and desire—and John Lurie's too-many-cigarettes/too-much-whiskey wheeze creates an indelible gumshoe.

Two-Lane Highway, ostensibly a showcase for the stinging guitar of Albert Collins, shares *Spillane*'s elliptical progress through a series of instrumental shuffles, stomps, and moody segues meant to—in Zorn's words—"... construct a plot, taking Collins through twelve scenes of various moods, keys, tempos, etc. It's Albert Collins wandering across the Texas landscape." The guitarist performs his role with aplomb, and the backing group—especially second guitarist Quine, organist Patton, and drummer Shannon Jackson—deserve equal kudos. In contrast to *Two-Lane Highway*'s accessible grooves, however, stands *Forbidden Fruit*'s acidic tang. The Kronos Quartet (aided by Christian Marclay's ironic distortion of recorded string sounds) alternately assaults and caresses the Japanese narration of sensual pleasures again undercut by an aura of danger.

As a saxist, Zorn's love of bebop was first displayed on the admirable Sonny Clark Memorial Quartet's *Voodoo* (Black Saint 0109). On *News For Lulu*, he and his cohorts take the concept another step beyond. Though the compositions—chosen with a devoted and discriminating eye from the rich, if unjustly neglected songbooks of Clark, Freddy Redd, Hank Mobley, and Kenny Dorham—retain their poppish flavor, they are of necessity redefined by the striking instrumentation: alto sax, trombone, and guitar. Airy and eloquent, the trio can play it close-to-the-vest (when Lewis' trombone "walks" a bassline and Frisell's guitar comps chords) or break free into contrapuntal abandon, energized every step of the way by bebop's enthusiastic buoyancy and an added jolt of '80s adventurism.

Together, Frisell, Lewis, and Zorn create a pleasing variety of tone, texture, and temperament; the trombonist's blustery assurance and technical mastery matching the urgent optimism of Zorn's piping alto (reminiscent, at times, of the late Ernie Henry's exuberant, ricochet phrasing). If Frisell's occasional reticence is problematic, his function is primarily to blend the three instrumental colors into harmony and, rhythmically, prevent his cohorts from flying off into space.

News For Lulu is an entertaining disc, and an important one. It reminds us that the ranks of post-bop players produced a number of great blowing tunes with witty or lyrical turns of phrase; it rescues these tunes from oblivion while communicating the joy and exhilaration at their essence, and shows that a fresh, imaginative, and fearless attitude can revitalize such material without mimicking older performance styles. It also provides yet another view of John Zorn, one of the '80s most important artists, who with each recording continues to surprise and delight.

—art lange



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cd reviews



BUD POWELL

THE GENIUS OF BUD POWELL—Verve 827 901-2: *TEA FOR TWO* (TAKES 5, 6, 10); *HALLELUJAH*; *PARISIAN THOROUGHFARE*; *OBIVION*; *DUSK IN SANDI*; *HALLUCINATIONS*; *THE FRUIT*; *A NIGHTINGALE SANG IN BERKELEY SQUARE*; *JUST ONE OF THOSE THINGS*; *THE LAST TIME I SAW PARIS*.
Personnel: Powell, piano; Ray Brown (cuts 1-4), bass; Buddy Rich (1-4), drums.

★ ★ ★

JAZZ GIANT—Verve 829 937-2: *TEMPUS FUGIT*; *CELIA*; *CHEROKEE*; *I'LL KEEP LOVING YOU*; *STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL*; *ALL GOD'S CHILLUN GOT RHYTHM*; *SO SORRY PLEASE*; *GET HAPPY*; *SOMETIMES I'M HAPPY*; *SWEET GEORGIA BROWN*; *YESTERDAYS*; *APRIL IN PARIS*; *BODY AND SOUL*.
Personnel: Powell, piano; Ray Brown (1-6), Curly Russell (7-13), bass; Max Roach, drums.

★ ★ ★

Reissues of venerable Verves (with two extra *Tea For Two* takes added to the '50-'51 *Genius*).

bringing all three together for the first time), these companion volumes are prime Powell, whose flaws are often overemphasized. There's a tendency to scrutinize Bud's every post-'40s phrase for signs of mental deterioration. Granted, he may play ambiguous lines and apparently unintended cloudy harmonies, as on the brisk *All God's Chillun* (from the '49-'50 *Giant*). But overall, that messiness is no more a liability for Bud than for Earl Hines in a key-crunching mood. Powell skitters very like Hines here and there on *Cherokee*.

Many Powell disciples have had prim sounds, not Bud. If he sounded "one-handed," as detractors sneer, his right had two-fisted punch: the ringing hammers sing on *Celia*. Bud understood that a sparer left needn't mean a smaller piano sound. (Despite the Bird-on-the-ivories talk, his style's plainly pianistic; *Parisian Thoroughfare's* stately, wide-ranging melody is no alto sax line.) Besides, the old "one-handed" charge is bogus; was Kenny Clarke accused of having one foot? More accurate to say Bud reinvented the left hand's function, the way Klook did the bass drum's: to drop bombs, not keep steady time. Like Clarke, he got away with it because what he did with other limbs confirmed his virtuosity.

The absence of steady bass is most evident on *Genius's* eight 1951 solos—even as *Oblivion* shows how starkly effective the left-hand bombs can be. (That title may push you toward biographical criticism—but *Hallucinations* is cheery fun, almost as ecstatic as *Last Time I*

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SAXOPHONISTS

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1 CHARLIE PARKER & BENNY CARTER. *JAM BLUES* (from *NORMAN GRANZ JAM SESSIONS*, Verve) Parker, Carter, Ben Webster, saxophones; Oscar Peterson, piano; Barney Kessel, guitar.

That's not the kind of music I'd put on my player today, or that I used to study or develop. They're obviously solid swingers of my vintage [b. 4/29/22]—a Norman Granz session?—but these aren't players I learned directly from. Does that make sense? Maybe Benny Carter? Herb Ellis? Not Oscar or Bird. Not many goosebumps here.

2 ARTIE SHAW ORCHESTRA. *VILIA* (from *BACK BAY SHUFFLE*, RCA) Shaw, clarinet; other personnel unknown.

That's Artie Shaw, but not obviously Shaw, as opposed to Benny Goodman. The records we had in Belgium before the Occupation were all before 1940. That tune [*sings a few bars*] is from Franz Lehár's *Merry Widow*. Well, we had records of Lunceford, Chick Webb with Ella, Lionel Hampton with Chu Berry, Cozy Cole, Clyde Hart, and we'd memorize choruses and have long discussions and analysis of Lester Young's solos with Basie. We'd have considered this commercial. Few goosebumps.

Oh yes, we had V-discs and *Voice of America* and we started gigging in Officers' Clubs, learning those "soldier songs"—*Long Ago And Far Away*, *I Wish I Knew*. All the European guitarists were Django clones, but before Liberation we started hearing Charlie Christian with Benny, and I learned a new concept in chording from Nat Cole's guitarist Oscar Moore. The memories of this pre-bop whirlwind came back strongly when I was on the Birdland bus in the '50s with my idols Billie Holiday and Lester Young. Everybody used to fight to sit next to Lester, but I sat next to [bassist] Eddie Jones in his big leather coat, because the bus was drafty!

3 LITTLE WALTER (JACOBS). *BLUES WITH A FEELING* (from *BOSS BLUES HARMONICA*, Chess) Jacobs, harmonica; other personnel unknown.

This is diatonic blues harmonica, I play chromatic. Some guys do it fantastically, but you need a lot of wind, and I have asthma! Those runs are inhaled from the gut, I play from the throat. I have a lot of admiration for these guys. New York studio people asked me, "Toots, can you play Bob Dylan or Sonny Terry?," and I had to recommend other guys. I learned some "blues harp" from two old black men where I was teaching

TOOTS THIELEMANS

by Fred Bouchard

A rare practitioner of jazz harmonica, Belgian-born Jean "Toots" Thielemans has been 1st in both the Readers and Critics **db** polls for "Miscellaneous Instrument" for the last four years. Caressing by night his "chrome sandwich" with his "Italian" rhythm team (Fred Hersch, Adam Nussbaum, Harvie Swartz) and in a nostalgic sit-in with Stéphane Grappelli at Cambridge's Reggattabar, Toots was ripe for company and philosophy by day.

A linguist and globetrotter—his longest gig was on guitar with George Shearing (1951-58)—Toots has worked with Quincy Jones, Peggy Lee, Charlie Parker, Jaco Pastorius, Bill Evans, and Billy Joel. Low-key Toots has kept a high profile with movie themes (notably *Midnight Cowboy*, John Williams films, lately *Jean de Florette*). Toots started with harmonica (1938), picked up guitar (1942), later whistled when Shearing bassist "Al McKibbin told me I whistled



better than I played" (1960). Toots was given no information about these tracks, played with thanks to Charlie Davidson's hi-fi hospitality. "I open my pores to all who walk and play instruments," said Toots, spurning stars for goosebumps.

harmonica at the White Plains Home for the Blind: when you inhale on a C harp, you get a G7. Lots of stars for the pioneers; some guy on a back porch in the South must have done it first, bless his soul.

4 GEORGE SHEARING AND JIM HALL. *EMILY* (from *FIRST EDITION*, Concord Jazz) Shearing, piano; Hall, guitar.

That's Johnny Mandel's *Emily*, and I liked that album when I first heard it. It's Herb Ellis and Monty Alexander, I think. Maybe Ray Brown or John Clayton on bass, it's not so obvious. This I like. After all the technique, I have to be moved emotionally. Herb's doing it to me there. He's mostly known as a swinger, like Oscar Peterson. Lots of goosebumps. Especially since I had a stroke six years ago, you don't play lots of notes, but you play the good ones. Some guys talk real fast, but don't say nothing. What I play is the product of many years of playing, paying dues, meeting your idols; music is that. I made a Chrysler jingle with Louis Armstrong; I sat next to Billie Holiday and her chihuahua; I rolled dice with Lester Young and drank his Lady Gordon. Then you come out with that little flower that is part technique and part message from the heart.

5 RON MCCROBY. *BOPLICITY* (from *PLAYS PUCCULO*, Concord Jazz) McCroby, whistler; Sam Most, flute; Bill Mays, piano.

That's my co-whistler, Ron McCroby; he whistles beautifully, and in tune. I whistle in unison with guitar like Slam Stewart and George Benson hum. If you take my guitar away, I don't sound so hot, except for commercials [whistles *Old Spice* theme] where I make a lot of money! Lots of stars because Ron whistles much better than I do, but not super goosebumps.

6 STEVIE WONDER. *HIGHER GROUND* (from *INNERVISIONS*, Tamla) Wonder, harmonica, keyboards.

That's not typical Stevie with two voices, but that's Stevie, and he gives me *all* the goosebumps. I respond to him like Miles Davis, Ray Charles, and Anita Baker. They do it to me! Like Miles said of Joao Gilberto, "This guy could kill me reading the phone book." I steal a lot of stuff from Stevie, who's a marvelous harmonica player, and Quincy tells me, "Stevie's still trying to play like you, too, and neither is succeeding!" He doesn't have great chops either, but the instrument serves his purpose. I love him like I love the blues. I can't explain it. **db**

FRED HERSCH

NOT IN IT FOR THE QUICK HIT, THE INTRIGUING FRED HERSCH IS A PIANO PLAYER OF MANY TALENTS, PRODUCING HIS MUSIC—AND OTHERS'—FOR THE LONG HAUL.

By Fred Bouchard

Kee your ear on Fred Hersch. This jack of all trades has become the Prince Hal of pianists, and could be king. By virtue of his extraordinarily graceful, harmonically and rhythmically intriguing piano playing, Hersch has shown himself to be one of the small handful of brilliant musicians of his generation. He also teaches, arranges, composes, has produced all three of his lead albums and many others, and until recently, ran a fine recording studio in his Manhattan apartment. Now that he's decided to concentrate on piano, composition, and production—listen well.

Fred Hersch and Jane Ira Bloom—partners four years in a rare, intuitive musical marriage—brought their exquisite duo (*As One*, JMT) to a clinic at New England Conservatory (where Hersch taught piano), and spoke candidly about their creative processes to intent and eager students. Monk's *Four In One* ran at differing clips with hairsbreadth stoptimes, *Everytime We Say Goodbye* teetered and soared, hawk-eyed to harmonic possibilities. At Nightstage in Cambridge, the duo expanded to four (bassist Ratzo Harris and drummer Tom Rainey) and traded much of its tight-rope breathlessness for extrovert energy and drive.

"Harmonic imagination," pinpointed Jane. "Fred's got it. He can reharmonize a melody without thinking of the chord structure. That's a rare gift. At our best, we reach a state of relaxation where our instruments just melt away and our minds communicate directly." Fred has shown this imagination, touch, and ESP as sideman over recent years with other demanding and thoughtful leaders (who also happen to be poll winners in miscellaneous instrument categories): flugelhornist Art Farmer, harmonicist Toots Thielemans, clarinetist Eddie Daniels.

Hersch made his presence deeply felt on several widely divergent albums released in 1987: with Bloom, Farmer, Daniels, saxophonists Tony Dagradi, Jimmy McGary, singer Roseanna Vitro. Best of all I thought was his second trio album, (*Sarabande*, Sunnyside), with strong-pulsed Charlie Haden and soul brother Joey Baron. There's one that wears better and better after five,



USA BOGDAN

10 listenings. (His first trio LP is *Horizons* on Concord Jazz.)

Like Gary Burton, Hersch tells as good a story with words as he does with his instrument. He spoke pure Herschtory at Back Bay Bistro, and we just ran the tape out. "We had a piano at home that my mother had played as a kid and my father later tried to learn. My father's mother is 88 and still plays; my mother's father (whom I'm named after) was a violinist. They regularly attended Cincinnati Symphony and chamber concerts, and there was popular music around the house. I started playing cartoon show themes by ear, so they figured I had some talent. I took class lessons at three or four, private lessons before I was five. When I'd improvise in the style of Mozart or Schubert, my mother'd yell from the kitchen, 'You're not practicing!'"

"I was a real music jock: composition and theory from eight to 13, winning piano contests by playing little pieces I'd written, arranging little songs I'd heard. I taught myself to play my grandfather's violin. I sang in choirs. Yeah, I even swam and all that other stuff kids do, too. When I got to high school, I started getting less serious about classical performance because I realized I'd really have to practice. I was one of those people who'd learn a piece about 90 percent and fake the rest with my fingers crossed. Though undisciplined, I continued playing for choirs and shows, sang, acted, played piano in musicals, even a stage band. That's when I started hearing the pop music I really came to love: Paul Simon, Stevie Wonder, Joni Mitchell, James Taylor. I'd improvise too, but it still wasn't jazz.

"It wasn't until I was a senior in high school that I heard real jazz. As a freshman at Grinnell College (Iowa), I learned that Herbie Hancock had gone there, and I didn't

even know who he was. It was 1973, the energy crisis year. They sent us home for six weeks at Christmas, and I started playing jazz with four friends. We weren't very good, but we were trying: taping tunes off records, getting little gigs playing Freddie Hubbard, Bird, Chick Corea, a little Monk. This was before fake books, so we had to tape our own charts, which was great. We'd sit in with some of the very good older cats, like guitarist Cal Collins, saxophonists Jimmy McGary and Gordon Brisker, drummer Dee Felice. There were few young players, so I was very lucky: I learned the music *on the bandstand*. They'd play standards, and it was sink or swim. There I was.

"I took a shot at Cincinnati Conservatory, to please my parents, but it was too structured. I stayed around town a while, played with those who passed through, a few trio gigs. I'd learned a way of improvising with other people, a common language. I liked hanging out all night playing, talking, listening to records, making money at it. It was a fraternal group that cut across race and economic backgrounds. The school of real players was so finite that, if you could play, you were part of the club. Even though I didn't yet have a touch or a sound, I had theory groundwork. And I was fearless: I'd try anything.

"The biggest challenge for any young player is to get your rhythm together with the forms, then try to make your own statement over the changes. That's the discipline of playing jazz. I'd get ideas okay, but I'd get carried away and forget where I was. I'd try things and get my butt kicked for screwing it up, but at least I tried. My parents, though outwardly supportive, were inwardly not too thrilled at first: I think they'd have preferred me to be a composer, conductor, or concertmaster. James Levine grew up down the block from me; we studied with the same teachers; we were both prodigies. But today I send them records and reviews, they hear me on the radio and get a big kick out of it. Hey, I was a professional musician! I had a bachelor pad with a trumpeter and I was making a living at music.

"One day I saw the handwriting on the wall and I knew I had to leave Cincinnati. It was getting a little too comfortable. It was the summer of '75, I'd just spent the summer playing in an amusement park. I loved Jaki Byard's playing. I'd heard about New England Conservatory, so I hopped in my car, came to Boston, auditioned, and got in. I stayed two years, toward the end of the Gunther Schuller era. I got a lot of exposure to contemporary music, studied classical and worked with chamber ensembles, played jazz groups. I didn't practice much but I learned a lot hanging out with the players, like classmates Marty Ehrlich and

Jerome Harris. I was just behind Boots Maleson and Ricky Ford.

"I was used to playing in professional situations where you got paid, there was a decent piano (so you didn't have to schlep in a Fender Rhodes), and you didn't have to play for the door. Since this wasn't happening around Boston, I played mostly GB gigs we got through the school, and left town when I graduated in 1977. I went home and played a gig in Cincinnati with Art Pepper, hit the road with Woody Herman for six weeks, then got to New York for good.

"I'd sub for Joanne Brackeen at the Surf Maid, and other places where you'd play for 25 or 50 dollars. I lived around the corner from Bradley's and was determined to get a gig there. It didn't bother me that Bradley had never hired anyone remotely my age (I was 21). I was persistent: I hung out, sat in, and hung out some more. Finally Red Mitchell, I think, twisted Bradley's ear and said, "Give the kid a gig." The first time Calvin Hill played bass. A few weeks later Bradley had a cancellation, so he called me in again, and I asked Sam Jones to play. It took us a night or two to get it together, but then we really hooked up. He was one of the great bassists, one of the great people in jazz. He gave me sound advice, good wisdom, took me under his wing, was really great to me. I worked with Sam's quintet (Tom Harrell, Keith Copeland, Bob Berg) and his 12-piece band. Sam's seal of approval got me some respect; Art Farmer hired me and later we made a CTI record with Joe Henderson. Joe then put me on his gig at Seventh Avenue South. That was the most excitement I'd seen yet (1979); he still plays more tenor than anybody: he's on another level.

"It wasn't easy street, but within a year I was making my living playing jazz with some great people. It was what I wanted to do, but I didn't turn down the Catskills or weddings. I played for some good singers, like Roseanna Vitro. I'd played a lot with Ratzo Harris—still do in Jane's band. There were more duos at places like the Knickerbocker. I took a trio to Tokyo and played the Blue Shell club for two months with Red Mitchell and Elliott Zigmund. Toots Thielemans was on tour and dropped in to see Red; years later he called me to play in New York. From the first we had a very easy relationship and have kept playing over the years. Toots recommended me to Eddie Daniels, so I started working with him [including a double Grammy nominee GRP record].

"In 1982, I was living around the corner from Lush Life, and the owner called me in to rehearse with Chet Baker, Charlie Haden, and Ben Riley. That following week I had Bradley's; Ron Carter played the first half of the week, and I asked Charlie if he'd play

the rest, and he said, 'Sure.' That was the start of our musical relationship. Charlie introduced me to Jane when she needed a piano [*Mighty Lights*, Enja], and I played with his Liberation Music Orchestra at Sweet Basil.

"It's nice to feel involved in other people's bands, have some input, write tunes, suggest repertoire. But now I feel I want to have a band of my own. I'm getting there. As a young kid in New York, I thought, 'I'll get a record out, make a date.' It never

materialized then, but I don't mind how things have evolved. I took a couple of years off from 1984-86 to open a 24-track studio business in my loft. I wound cables, made out invoices, booked my calendar. I know enough now to be a good producer. [Hersch's fine work on Eddie Daniels' *To Bird With Love* and his own trio dates speak for that expertise.]

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Kellaway, Don Pullen—on a 1896 Steinway B seven-footer. It's one of the best instruments I've ever played—glad I own it! If I had it to do over, I would not have opened the business: you can be a good musician or a good businessman, but not both. It's a service business, like a restaurant: you gotta be on top of it and you gotta make the customer happy. I kept the equipment but stopped the business. It's now my home again, but I love producing. I like projects—Eddie Daniels', Toots', my own. I can use my skills: arrange, write, budget, run sound, supervise the general tone of a date."

Today Hersch's own music is expanding in new directions: electronics (using synthesizers, with a big project afoot), acoustic (new quintet album coming with Tim Hagans, Harvie Swartz, Joe Lovano, and Jeff Hirshfield), and classical (the French Collection on Angel for jazz trio playing his arrangements of Debussy, Ravel, and Faure, with soloists Toots, Kevin Eubanks, and James Newton). He's written a wild piece of concert music for the Boston-based violin/marimba duo called Marimolin, and wants to write more. But he sounds desperate to do it all, voicing the age-old plaint: "I need time!" Not in his fingers he doesn't.

As with Bloom, Hersch has some of his best musical moments one on one. With Toots at the Regattabar at Cambridge's Charles Hotel, they brought new dimensions of unsentimental emotion to *Sophisticated Lady* and Toots' movie themes *Midnight Cowboy* and *The Dragon*. "I respond to Fred's harmony and touch and the way he listens," says Toots with warm candor. "Others may 'swing' more, but they haven't got Fred's harmony and counter melody."

"I'm a 'phrase' player," concludes Hersch, who clearly thinks and plays in complete thoughts and, unusually in this day and age, consistently relates the melody he's playing to the phrases he makes up. "I get involved in the structure of the tune and how it unfolds," says Hersch, "and I like to stretch the phrases over the form in different ways. Having learned harmony from string quartets, I think horizontally." One of many "pretty" players who get tagged with the Bill Evans stamp, Hersch likes to emphasize his affinity for Paul Bley's phrase-making, Earl "Fatha" Hines' abstract qualities, Ahmad Jamal's dramatic tension. Phrases tumble out of his head effortlessly to the keyboard: arpeggios descend like singed moths, cirrusy tremolos (not thunderheads) gather and dissolve, free melody sings right out of the green sargasso of his psyche.

Hersch is shooting not for the quick hit, but the long haul; he wants his flavor to last and last, not like bubblegum, but spearmint. In that respect, he does quote late-bloomer Evans' "slow penetration" with barely an album a year. "My music doesn't hit you over the head, it draws you in. It's meant to

intrigue, reveal a story. There are pieces I've been listening to since I was five years old that still move me with awe and wonder. I spend more time trying to carve one phrase that moves you, that sneaks around a corner and grabs you, than playing a bunch of notes fast and loud. It lasts longer." db

JOHN PATITUCCI

FROM HIS HEART TO HIS HEAD, HIS SIX-STRING TO HIS ACOUSTIC: JOHN PATITUCCI COVERS THE BASSES AND DRIVES UNDER, OVER, AND THROUGH THE GROOVE.

By Philip Booth

The classic scenario with the ongoing electric/acoustic bass dilemma is this: the acoustic masters and lesser practitioners of the art continue to classify their electric descendants of the wood-and-string originals as upstarts, unnatural combinations of the E-A-D-G basics with modern technology, resulting in bastardized instruments lacking any of the sensitivity of their forebears.

Champions of the electric are also guilty of a certain snobbery: who needs the bulky, old obsolete acoustic when Leo Fender and his spiritual kin have made it so much easier and quicker to deliver bottom-end ideas to the forefront?

John Patitucci, the 27-year-old bassist whose lightning-speed chops and lyrical, intuitive improvisation have anchored the Chick Corea Elektric Band since its inception in 1985, used to face acoustic/electric discrimination on a regular basis.

"I've gone through a lot of different phases about that, because some people would hear me play acoustic and they'd say, 'Oh, yeah, he's a bebopper.' Some people would hear me play electric and go, 'Yeah, he wouldn't play with a bow, would he?' I think they're just different parts of my personality. You can express yourself differently on each. They are kind of brothers, although now with the [Smith/Jackson] six-string, it's sort of a whole 'nother thing. Sometimes I look at my six-string sort of like my tenor."

Patitucci, like Corea sideman Stanley Clarke before him, has used his imaginative groove-nailing and solo work on both instruments to slay that divisional dragon. The latest proof is the Pacific Palisades, Califor-

nia-based musician's eponymously-titled GRP debut, a nine-track (12 on the CD) earfeast that showcases the astonishing work of a most agile, inventive bassist working in an improvisation-oriented context.

John Patitucci—co-produced by Corea—shifts into high gear with *Growing*, grounded by the leader's impeccable bass-popping on his Lag four-string and topped with his warm-toned, absolutely seamless solo sprint through and seemingly beyond the boundaries of his six-string. The LP continues in the same jazz-with-an-occasional-funk-base-and-a-pop-gloss vein, using Michael Brecker's sandpaper-sweet tenor improvisations on stand-outs *Wind Sprint*, *Searching*, *Find-*



ing, and *Peace And Quiet Time*. And then there's the emotionally moving, textural *Our Family*, on which the bassist plays his six-string alone except for the artful tension created by Corea's supportive work on Synclavier percussion.

"*Our Family* is kind of like a solo piece," Patitucci explains. "I wanted it to feel, in a way, like a guy sitting in Brazil on his porch playing a nylon-string guitar. It's supposed to be warm, because it is about my family. It's like a chord-melody thing. It's definitely got some latin and also some Brazilian flavor to it."

Patitucci's acoustic desires were brought to fruition on vinyl with the Elektric Band's *No Zone* track on the recently released GRP *Super Live In Concert*, throughout *The Manhattan Jazz Quintet Plays Blue Note* (Paddlewheel, a division of the Tokyo-based King label), and on last year's *To Bird With Love* (GRP), with clarinetist Eddie Daniels. His acoustic work takes center stage on the solo LP's Corea-penned *Zaragoza*—using bowed bass lines in unison with the pianist's crisp keyboard zags—and on the CD-only *Kileen*, a quiet, introspective ballad named for Patitucci's wife of four years.

Patitucci, whose teenage exposure to Jaco Pastorius' debut convinced him that he

wasn't alone in his quest to turn the electric bass into a bebop tool, wanted to avoid the late bassist's perhaps fatal (for maximum sales success) distraction: a penchant for mind-warping variety, demonstrated on his history-making first release with material that ranged from Charlie Parker's *Donna Lee* to Sam and Dave's *Come On, Come Over*.

"I just selected the ones that I thought would fit together and work," Patitucci says. "I wanted to make some sort of a cohesive statement. I didn't want to spread myself out too much and do so many radical shifts. Some people get confused when you hand them a record with those kinds of opposite ends of the spectrum. I tried to keep it channeled so that everything made sense following each other. At the same time I didn't want to limit myself, in terms of styles."

The roots of Patitucci's stylistic diversity—r&b, rock & roll, latin, swing, bebop, fusion, and gospel influences all figure into his sound and approach—aren't difficult to track. The second of five siblings born to Italian-Catholic parents in Brooklyn, he grew up listening to Stevie Wonder and the Beatles on the bedroom radio and Mario Lanza records in the living room.

A pair of pivotal events shaped his choice of instrument and musical direction. The first: older brother Thomas decided to play guitar. John, after experimenting with guitar, bongos, and drums, took Tom's advice. "My brother said, 'I need somebody to accompany me. Why don't you play the bass?' and I said 'okay.'"

Patitucci, at the age of 10, managed to acquire a \$10 el cheapo instrument, taken right off the wall of a house in the neighborhood. "It was a Telstar bass, which was an old Japanese-made bass, way before the Japanese became really good at making basses. It buzzed on every fret. Short-scale bass, too—really short scale."

The other essential happening: the brothers' grandfather, who worked on a New York City road-repair crew, inherited a box of records while at a job site. "In that carton were the first jazz records that my brother and I were exposed to—some Wes, some Jimmy Smith, some Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers, and Ray Charles."

Patitucci decided at the tender age of 13 to make music his profession. He was turned on to the solo possibilities of his instrument shortly after his father, an insurance man, got a job transfer and moved the family to northern California.

Chris Poehler, a San Francisco State University music major who was student-teaching at Patitucci's eighth grade, imparted one or two things about the state of the bass to the young practiceaholic. "He hipped me to this Donnie Hathaway record with Willie Weeks on it—*Donnie Hathaway Live*. It had a tune called *Everything Is*

Everything on it, where everybody jammed, and Willie Weeks took a solo on that record that was unbelievable. It brought the house down. That was the first time I had heard a record where everybody in the band took a solo and then the bass player blew everyone away. Poehler, who introduced Patitucci—by then an aficionado of the Ron Carter and Ray Brown sound—to the acoustic bass, also urged the young jazzhead to begin transcribing solos. Patitucci took on classic improvisations by John Coltrane, Tete Montoliu, Corea, Herbie Hancock, John Scofield, and Michael Brecker.

Patitucci, following graduation from high school, and a few jazz and Christian/gospel gigs in northern California, moved south to Orange County in 1978 and pursued classical bass studies with Abe Luboff at Long Beach State University. He worked his way into the studio scene, later earning a 1983 NARAS (National Association of Recording Arts and Sciences) nomination as electric bass Most Valuable Player. He took home the NARAS award for acoustic bass MVP in 1986.

Patitucci has played with Gap Mangione, the Crusaders, Robben Ford, Tom Scott, Freddie Hubbard, Stan Getz, Dave Grusin, Herb Alpert, David Sanborn, Joe Farrell, Airtio and Flora Purim, Clare Fischer, and—most importantly—the late Victor Feldman before playing for and meeting Corea at a Valentine's Day bash at the pianist's home.

Patitucci, drummer Dave Weckl, and Corea played the initial Elektric Band gigs in April 1985, later adding guitarist Frank Gambale and saxophonist Eric Marienthal. Last year they returned to the egg with a pair of acoustic trio mini-tours.

His by-now celebrated six-string conversion came in the fall of 1985. "I had heard Anthony Jackson play some things. He's got his own specific and personal style that I think is brilliant. Hearing that, I thought that that would really fall in line with my concept, in terms of a bassist wanting to expand his

range in both directions for soloing and for ensemble playing. The low notes sounded really phenomenal within the context of a groove or an ensemble section and the high-C string—I thought that would help me more with trying to get more of my tenor saxophone thing happening for the solos. That's what prompted it."

Patitucci has found time for a few other endeavors. Among his other projects are three—count 'em—working groups in L.A.: his electric quartet with synthesizer men Dave Witham, John Beasley, and Alex Acuna, and Tommy Brechtlein or Vinnie Colaiuta on drums; an acoustic trio with pianist Alan Pasqua and either Colaiuta or Ralph Penland on drums; and an acoustic quintet, with valve trombonist Mike Fahn, drummer Peter Donald, tenor saxophonist Bob Sheppard, and pianist Tad Weed.

He recently replaced Eddie Gomez as the bassist for the ever-cooking Manhattan Jazz Quintet, a sometimes unit with trumpeter Lew Soloff, tenor saxophonist George Young, pianist Dave Matthews, and Weckl. In May, the band made a 10-day blitz of Japanese halls.

The source of all this energy and creativity? Patitucci, quietly but unabashedly, couches the explanation in spiritual terms. "The experience of realizing there's a personal God has definitely reshaped my attitude about why you play music. Sometimes it's easy to get a real selfish attitude toward music and then forget that there are actually people listening to it.

"The whole thing is to touch people and not just intellectually stimulate yourself. There's a lot more to it than that. Sure, you should be interested in it and you should be committed and you should be very honest about the music you make. You should really enjoy it. But the purpose of it, for me, number one, is to give back to the Lord and make him happy and then to make the people who come to hear the music happy." db

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TRIBUTE TO GIL EVANS

ST. PETER'S CHURCH/NEW YORK

They all came to church on Easter Sunday afternoon to say goodbye to Gil. Old friends and colleagues from the Claude Thornhill days were there. Fellow musicians who worked with him over the years showed up to pay their respects. Fans who followed Gil's progress from *The Birth Of The Cool* (1950) to *Miles Ahead* (1957) to *Porgy And Bess* (1958) to *Sketches of Spain* (1959) and on into the '60s with *Out Of The Cool*, the '70s with *Svengali* and *Priestess*, and the '80s with his Monday Night Orchestra were also on hand.

Some in the crowd, sporting outrageous bonnets, had just dropped in out of curiosity after taking their annual stroll down Fifth Avenue. They sat side by side with the celebrated jazz musicians in attendance and listened to the testimony of those who knew and loved Gil. And they heard music. Wonderful music. Some were hearing Gil's music for the first time and remarked at how fresh and stimulating it seemed to them.



George Adams

Many were regulars at the Sweet Basil's sessions on Monday nights. They grieved along with Sweet Basil's clubowner Horst Leipolt while simultaneously rejoicing in the music. It was a grand afternoon and a fitting tribute to a true genius of the jazz world, who died at age 75 on Sunday, March 20, in Mexico (see db, June '88).

Rev. John Garcia Gensel, the pastor of this very hip Midtown parish where jazz vespers are regularly held, had some inspiring words to say about the late maestro. Gerry Mulligan reminisced about the Thorn-

hill band and *The Birth Of The Cool* sessions with Miles Davis. George Avakian, Mr. Newport himself, had some warm words to impart to this crowd. And trumpeter Jimmy Maxwell spun some yarns about his long-time friend.

And then there was music.

Joe Beck performed a moving guitar solo in memory of the maestro, followed by a beautiful harp solo by Emily Mitchell Soloff, whose husband Lew Soloff performed every Monday night with Gil at Basil's.

Gerry Mulligan led a fine nonet that featured John Clark on french horn, Bill Barber and Dave Barger on trombones, Buster Williams on bass, Danny Gottlieb on drums, John Lewis on piano, Soloff on trumpet, and Lee Konitz on alto sax. Their lush renditions of *Boplicity* and *Moon Dreams* had many in the crowd swooning and nodding knowingly.

Next up was Cecil Taylor. His introspective solo piano tribute to Gil was gentle, lyrical, and beautiful. Not exactly what you'd expect from such a volatile force. It was a tender, heartfelt tribute to the man.

Things got more emotional when the Monday Night Orchestra finally took the stage (or, in this case, the altar). Tenor saxophonist George Adams—who had also lost his partner and close friend, drummer Dannie Richmond, the same week that Gil passed—soloed with incredible passion and feeling during a medley that included *La Nevada* and *Orange Was The Color Of Her Hair*, then *Silk Blue*. The emotional intensity of his very personal testimony to Gil had many in the crowd crying tears of sadness and joy. Afterwards, Adams recited these words in memory of the man he called Mr. Maestro: "A song as gentle as Springtime/Sound envisioned through a daring sense of harmonic passion and fearless creativity./This is how I remember the human experience./A kind and gentlemanly expression yet masterful and confident in its own magnanimity./A light has shone forth for all to nurture and appreciate./I feel truly blessed to have been (and still am) a reflection of this musical and universal light."

Other highlights of this very special tribute included Chris Hunter's searing alto sax solo on *Goodbye Pork-Pie Hat* and Delmar Brown's gospel-tinged vocal improvisation, accompanying himself on churchy organ. They all reached deeply into themselves and gave it up for Gil.

After the Monday Night Orchestra completed its rousing set, the announcement was made that pianist Gil Goldstein would fill in for Gil as concertmaster while Gil's son, trumpeter Miles Evans, would take over the role of bandleader.

Like the Mingus Dynasty, Gil's Monday Night Orchestra will live on long after its leader has checked out. With trumpeters



Cecil Taylor

Lew Soloff, Shunzo Ono, and Miles Evans, trombonists Dave Barger and David Taylor, synthesizer players Pete Levin and Delmar Brown, pianist Gil Goldstein, electric bassist Mark Egan, drummer Danny Gottlieb, tenor saxophonist George Adams, alto saxophonist Chris Hunter, french horn player John Clark, tuba player Howard Johnson, guitarist Hiram Bullock, baritone saxophonist Tom Malone, and percussionist Anita Evans, the music and the spirit of Gil Evans will live on.

—bill milkowski

CHICK COREA & GARY BURTON

BLUE NOTE/NEW YORK

Chick Corea and Gary Burton first teamed up in 1972 to record the now-classic *Crystal Silence*, an album that captured the airy freshness of fusion's first blush. The pianist and vibraharpist later collaborated on a couple of other duet LPs (as well as the *Lyric Suite For Sextet*) but maintained their own bands and careers, never touring regularly as a unit. Instead they get together once a year—at a festival in Europe, a concert hall in Japan, or a college in the Midwest—for an unrehearsed performance of Corea's intricate, fully-notated scores. This year they made their first New York club appearance, coinciding with the CD release of *Crystal Silence* and *In Concert, Zürich*.

Corea and Burton's music has been described as proto-New Age, but it might just as easily, and as inadequately, be categorized



ENID FARBBER

Gary Burton and Chick Corea backstage of the Blue Note.

as proto-minimalist or proto-chamber jazz. It's certainly influenced by classical impressionism and cool jazz, and the pastel motifs and shimmering mallet/keyboard textures sometimes suggest Philip Glass or Steve Reich. But the restlessly open-ended melodies don't repeat; rather, they build, and for all their refinement and dreamy sentimentality, they swing. It's hard to be passionate and detached at the same time without coming across as lukewarm, but through rhythmic vitality and sheer bravura, Chick and Gary manage to pull it off.



ENID FARBBER

Chick Corea

From behind a Bösendorfer grand that nearly filled the stage, Corea settled the packed house with a bit of glib stage patter. Then the duo launched into Steve Swallow's *Falling Grace*, their standard concert opener and the only non-Corea composition of the set. Chick played the bright introduction, then comped deftly behind Gary's more aggressive mallet runs. They traded and blended springy leads on the gently ruminative *Mirror, Mirror*, and whipped swirling glissandos into waves of shimmering color on *Song To Gayle*. Next came *Señor Mouse*, with its flamenco filigree, followed by *Children's Songs*, a chamberish, eclectic suite of

miniatures, and *Brasilia*, a set of romantic variations from the *Lyric Suite*.

Corea and Burton seemed looser and more spontaneous than on their record, making much of the written material sound improvised. Their interplay was virtually telepathic, however, and they tossed off dovetailing sections, counterpoint lines, and thorny unison passages with preternatural ease. Their annual reunions have kept their music vital and challenging; at this show the exhilaration shone from their faces as they chased and tussled with each other like a pair of capering kittens. —*larry birnbaum*

NIXON IN CHINA

JOHN F. KENNEDY CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS/ WASHINGTON, D.C.

Nixon *In China* is something of a coup in a number of respects. The marshalling of funding sources for a first opera, even from a highly visible composer such as John Adams, is impressive: an initial commission of \$100,000 for the score and poet Alice Goodman's libretto; millions spent for runs in Houston, Brooklyn, and Washington, and television rights for a nationwide PBS broadcast. Certainly, such sums are not unheard of in mounting a new production of *Madame Butterfly* or *Porgy And Bess*, but such works are nothing if not known economic and artistic quantities.

Nixon In China, on the other hand, ventured into uncharted waters on several counts. Adams, Goodman, and stage director Peter Sellars held a prism to a contemporary political watershed, leaving some of the resulting patches of vivid color pristine, while exaggerating others into farce and caricature. For Adams, Nixon, Mao, and Chou have attained a mythic dimension comparable to that which Oedipus and Odysseus had for the Greeks. His score intensifies their heroic gestures and their private foibles, and milks some laugh lines, as well.

Adams' theatricality has been linked to such "maximalist" composers as Richard Strauss, and it is exuberantly displayed throughout *Nixon In China*—he even quotes *Die Walkure*. He dishes up bombast (the arrival of Air Force One; the climax of Chiang Ch'ing's ideologically pure ballet, *The Red Detachment Of Woman*) and sentimentality

(Nixon's memories of his canteen in the Pacific theater of WWII, *Nick's Snack Shack*) with equal zeal. The sharp dramatic edge Adams gives to Minimalist structures is the saving grace during the statically staged meeting of Nixon (baritone James



JIM CALDWELL

Left-right: Marion Dry (3rd Secretary to Mao), Mori Opatz (1st Secretary to Mao), John Dykers (Mao Tse-tung), Stephanie Friedman (2nd Secretary to Mao), James Maddalena (Richard Nixon), and Thomas Hammons (Henry Kissinger) in Act I, Scene II.

Maddalena) and Mao (tenor John Dykers).

Adams most satisfying work, however, extends beyond a punch line's momentary charge. Even more forcefully than with the meeting of Nixon and Mao, Adams underpins the cultural disparities that were a subtext to the political rapprochement during the first banquet. Chou (baritone Sanford Sylvan) is given a noble aria for his banquet toast, his sagaciousness reinforced by smooth, solemn arpeggios. Nixon's stilted toast triggers a subtle orchestral unraveling, until he sticks in the line, "No one is out of touch."—a great play on stereotypical politicians, and Minimalism—sounding like a broken record.



JIM CALDWELL

Corolann Page (Pot Nixon) about to descend stairs from Air Force I as James Maddalena (Richard Nixon) is greeted by Sanford Sylvan (Chou En-Lai) in Act I, Scene I.

As he has demonstrated in such earlier works as *Harmonium*, Adams deftly handles the demands of choral writing; some of the most riveting moments in *Nixon In China* are the twenty-four voice chorus. Goodman relates in her notes that choruses were deleted in favor of arias in the opera's final cut. Assuming they were cut for extra-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 60



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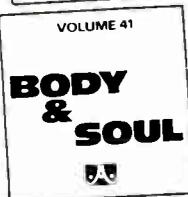
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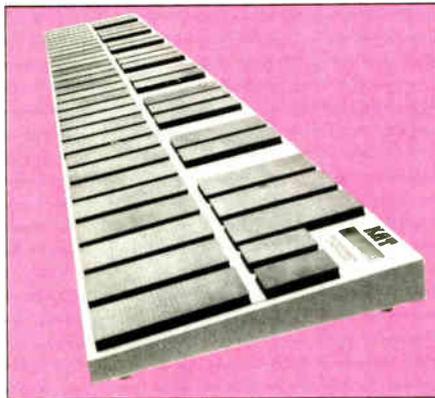
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PERCUSSION SHOP



KAT PERCUSSION CONTROLLER

KAT (Longmeadow, MA) has announced a new version of their MIDI Percussion Controller which includes a software update, new manual, and an optional backlit display. The player controls samplers, synths, and drum machines through MIDI using 256 user-programmable setups. The KAT is modular (up to four octaves), velocity sensitive, and totally polyphonic. It will control 16 MIDI instruments at once, play three note chords on each key, change programs on four MIDI instruments at the same time, or play altered tunings. The MIDI-In-Merge includes a channel shifter that will reroute data to a new channel.



SABIAN 13-INCH FUSION HATS

SABIAN LTD. (Meductic, NB) offers added punch from a smaller hi-hat cymbal by matching either a specially designed HH (hand hammered) or AA (machine hammered) hi-hat top with a heavy, unlathed HH Leopard Bottom. The heavier, harder cymbals minimize the risk of unwanted overtones, while the lighter top cymbals give tightly focused, high-pitched "chick" sounds with maximum cut. Two holes in the bell of

the bottom cymbal expedite air release for faster response.

SOFTWARE SECTOR

NEW ENGLAND DIGITAL'S SYNCLAVIER ENGRAVING SYSTEM

NEW ENGLAND DIGITAL (White River Junction, VT) offers the compact efficiency of desk-top publishing with high-speed processing technology suitable for the full-scale professional publisher with its Synclavier Music Engraving System. Hand engraving of scores is eliminated. Data and subsequent editorial changes are entered via a MIDI keyboard, terminal keyboard, or mouse, which are linked to a laser printer or typesetting system. Composers, arrangers, and working musicians can write a score by playing music in real-time and then manipulating it on screen. The system will automatically extract parts from a complete score or generate lead sheets.

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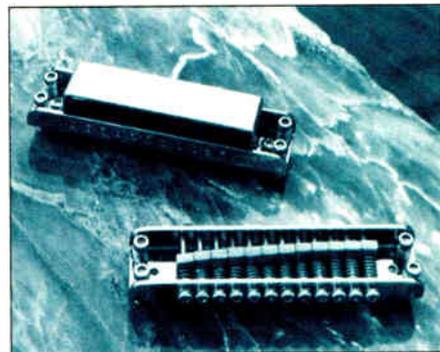


LEBLANC'S H104 FRENCH HORN

G. LEBLANC (Kenosha, WI) has introduced a new double french horn designed by horn player Barry Tuckwell. The handmade horn has a nickel-silver body and a solid bronze bell with matching main branch. The 12-inch bell's bayonet-style connection allows attachment with a single twist. The H104 features six interchangeable leadpipes in a choice of three different metals (gold brass, nickel-silver, or yellow brass) with either a large or small Venturi. The horn features a

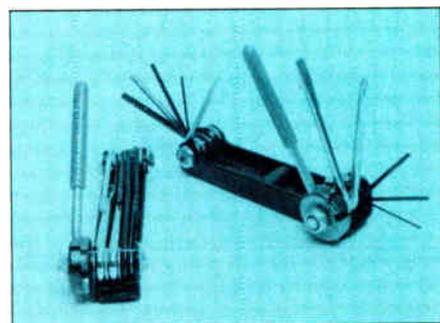
quick-release clamping device that allows players to switch between pipes easily, without tools.

GUITAR WORLD



RICKENBACKER'S 12-STRING BRIDGE

RICKENBACKER INTERNATIONAL (Santa Ana, CA) introduces a new bridge with 12 individually adjustable saddles to attain precise intonation of all strings. Four height/angle adjustments allow for setting pitch and action. The bridge channel is constructed of cold steel with a heavy chrome plate to insure sustain and years of service. The bridge is designed for trouble-free retrofit installation of Rickenbacker 12-string guitars and has been featured as standard equipment on selected 12-string models.



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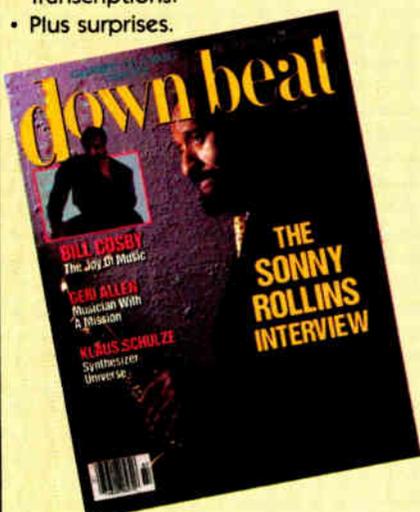
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pro session

LEW TABACKIN'S SOLO ON LEW'S THEME— A TENOR SAXOPHONE TRANSCRIPTION

by Trent Kynaston

Lew Tabackin's tenor solo on *Lew's Theme* (his own composition) is taken from the Akiyoshi/Tabackin Big Band album *Tanuki's Night Out* (Ultra Disk Jam 006), recorded on March 24 and 25, 1981, in Los Angeles.

The cut opens with a short tenor cadenza. (The first three notes are played using low C and C# fingerings with the octave key.) Fragments of the theme are used to set the tempo in the eight-measure intro to bar one. The rhythm section enters here and Lew plays six choruses of blues before the full sax section enters in bar 73 with the first statement of the tune. This solo is full of the Hawkins and Rollins characteristics that are so evident and important in Tabackin's unique and often refreshing style. Pay special attention to the full gamut of growls used throughout the solo. I have noted these when they are very prominent, but notice all the subtle (defined in *Webster's* as "delicately skillful") uses of it throughout the solo.

Am7 D7 Gb Em7 Am7 D7

B Gb C7 C#07 Gb G7

C7 Gb EA

Am7 D7 G#7 Em7 Am7 D7 (alt.)

C Gb C7 C#07 Gb Dm7 G7 (alt.)

C7 (alt.) G7 (alt.)

E7 (alt.) Am7 D7 Gb Em7 Am7 D7

D Gb C7 C#07 Gb G7 (GROWL)

C7 (GROWL) Gb (GROWL) E7

Am7 D7 (GROWL) Gb A#7

E Gb C7 C#07 Gb G7

C7 (alt.) G7 E7(b9)

A7(b9) Am7 D7 G7 G#7 Am7 D7

F G7 C9 C#07 Gb G7(b9)

C7 (GROWL) Gb E7(b9)

Am7 D7 Gb Em7 Am7 D7 G

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World Radio History

musical reasons, these choruses, along with *The Chairman Dances*, comprise a substantial output left by the wayside. As the inclusion of *The Chairman Dances* would have fleshed out what is now a sketchy relationship between Mao and Chiang, these choruses, in all likelihood, would have brought more light to any of the opera's facets.

Yet, in the politics of mainstreaming avant garde opera, anything that can keep the running time at the magic three-hour mark is indicated. If the reception *Nixon In China* received from an Easter Sunday matinee audience at the Kennedy Center is any indication, Adams and his collaborators have succeeded in giving *Nixon In China* as much broad-based appeal as possible, and probably would have succeeded without the hilarious trashing of Henry Kissinger, which set the inside-the-Beltway audience howling. Still, the best, and perhaps only, chance audiences throughout the entire country will have to see *Nixon In China* will be on television. —bill shoemaker

cd reviews CONTINUED FROM PAGE 46



Powell at the Blue Note, Paris.

Saw Paris or playful as a trio *Georgia Brown*.) The ballads *Dusk* and *Nightingale* underscore how much he shares with the even more reductive Monk. Like Monk, he may imply stride rhythms with a scant few notes (*Georgia Brown*).

If Powell flummoxed an occasional line, it's because he kept testing the limits of his formidable technique. There's a relentless musical tension in his fearlessness—the stakes were always high. In his hands, bop was anything but safe.

So why less than four or five stars? Because the two discs' combined times (38:30 + 40:16) put 'em within a few minutes of some single CDs on my shelf. Leave off the *Tea* alternates and all the music would easily fit on one disc—one with the same contents as Verve's 1976 *Genius Of two-fer* (whose Giddins liner notes are recycled into both CD booklets). These shorties are especially puzzling, as other of PolyGram's recent CD-only reissues clock in at over an hour each. But then the CD reissue boom is characterized by a lack of in-house consistency at major labels. —kevin whitehead

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BILL COSBY

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BC: You better believe it. And WRTI in Philadelphia. It's very important when I'm on the road to find a station that's doing it. You get degrees of it. Some stations have that titty-boom music, what I call waterbed music. All of the electronic music sounds like a waterbed with two classical chords and a hip break somewhere.

MB: You're doing more of your own music now.

BC: We're going to do it with my partners at Philly International. There are some songs I wrote in the late '60s and when I went into the studio. I had Harold Mabern on piano and Mark Egan the bass player. This is the first bass player I've ever had who could play all of the things I wanted played. To me he's just amazing. Al Foster on drums, and I used John Scofield on guitar. With that quartet we were able to do one song the way I wanted it done. And then I did a couple of other tunes.

There's a clearness for me with a quartet. I used to have an 18-piece band with three drummers. It was a definite overkill. I've also used Don Pullen and he's wonderful. I used Sonny Sharrock and I think I know how to properly use Sonny and make Sonny happy. I would love to

have heard Sonny with Jimi Hendrix.

MB: You're also doing something called R-R-J or Rap-Rock-Jazz.

BC: This is fun music. It's serious in the form of it, but fun. It's like hip Spike Jones—although Spike Jones was very hip. We're having fun with rap music and rhythm and blues, and out of it comes this window of what would be *Stardust*, but we've changed it. We've put this ballad in there but it's on-time so it doesn't jar the dancer.

MB: So it's back to jazz you can dance to.

BC: I want people to dance, yeah! I think I've found a way. What I hear with rap music is a freedom to incorporate things, like what Rahsaan did with sound effects on his records—like break a glass.

MB: Not to forget Ooga-Ooga.

BC: It's a funny sound. Mingus had a great deal of humor in his music, although he was telling more of a serious story. My music has a fun feel and the craziness. It's a combination perhaps of Mingus and Rahsaan and Spike Jones. I think people are going to find it very interesting.

MB: So you'll have two albums, one with the quartet, one with R-R-J.

BC: I think three albums. There's one we're going to put together and the only way I can describe it is *In Two*. These are things—I don't care how old you are—they're hip, they're smooth, they're enjoyable, and they're all in two.

MB: What will you call these albums?

BC: That's the last thing I think about. That's almost a throwaway. I remember Miles Davis would do a song and one of the most irritating moments for him was when somebody would say, "What's the name of it?" It's like a painter finishing a piece and someone saying, "What do you call it?" And you say, "Untitled. I don't know." And they say, "How can you paint something and not know what it is?" And the answer is very easy.

MB: It's the painting.

BC: My point is that in the beginning there was not the word. I think that in the beginning was the picture.

MB: And for you with jazz, in the beginning was the dance, and it still is.

BC: Hello!

db

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KAZU MICHISITA is a 28-year-old guitarist from Osaka, Japan. Seeing Miles Davis with guitarists John Scofield and Mike Stern influenced him to switch from rock to jazz. A 1987 graduate of Berklee, he studied big band arranging with Herb Pomeroy, Greg Hopkins, and Hal Crook, and was a recipient of the Jim Hall Scholarship in '85 and the Berklee Faculty Scholarship in '86. A resident of Boston, Michisita has performed locally with Tiger Okoshi and Makoto Ozone, and toured with the Gary Burton Berklee Group in 1985. He is a member of the latin jazz group El Eco which appeared at the Montreal Jazz Festival, and has opened for such performers as Gato Barbieri and Tania Maria.

played in jazz, concert, and marching bands and is the lead alto in the school's award-winning jazz ensemble, which won two firsts at both the Berklee and University of New Hampshire jazz festivals during the three years that Krygowski was a member of the band. He studies jazz improvisation with Rick Sadlon and classical music with Tony Campanelli and has been selected for the North Central Connecticut Conference Music Festival and the Northern Regional Concert Bands. Krygowski's musical interests include blues and bop, as well as fusion and funk. Charlie Parker is his first real influence on the saxophone along with John Coltrane, Michael Brecker, and Cannonball Adderley.



SECURITY is a Chicago-based band with a progressive, Euro-rock sound. The group's core, guitarist Francis Banich and keyboardist Eric Mandell, both 24, met at auditions for the Northwestern University jazz band. They formed the band after graduating from NU with degrees, respectively, in classical guitar, and jazz piano and composition. After noncommittal responses to two sets of audition tapes, Security recorded an album themselves. Available only in the Chicago area, *Everything They Said Was True* has sold 2,000 copies and can be heard on college radio stations throughout the Midwest and South. This album of original songs combines danceable rhythms, melodic hooks, and clever lyrics.



JIM KRYGOWSKI, 17-year-old from Windsor Lock, CT, began playing alto saxophone at 12 in his middle school's concert band. In high school he has



CRAIG SCHWEITZER is an 18-year-old graduate of Century High School in Bismarck, ND. His third grade teacher sparked his interest in music and he began studying classical guitar. In high school he developed an interest in jazz. Schweitzer played guitar in the school jazz bands and swing choirs for five years and euphonium for three years in the concert and marching bands. He is a member of the McDonald's All-American High School Marching band and has been guitarist for the University of Mary All-Festival Big Band for two years. Schweitzer also plays tenor and five-string banjos in a local band, Dixieland North, and gives lessons.

He plans to attend the University of Mary in the fall on a music scholarship.

Marching Band and both the Big Band and Jazz Combo. He has played in the Portland Youth Symphony and Wind Ensemble for three years and attended the SYMS summer music school at the University of New Hampshire where he played in the Honors Jazz Band and was a featured soloist. His senior year he was director of his high school jazz band. Neveu plays in a regional honors jazz combo under the direction of Richard Marsters. Neveu also plays in the horn section of an r&b band, the Trade.



SONYA JASON, a 25-year-old saxophonist from Phoenix, AZ began studying classical piano at age four. At 10 she began on alto sax and added flute, clarinet, and soprano sax. Besides playing in her award-winning high school symphonic, marching, and jazz bands, she won chairs in regional and all-state ensembles and in the Young Sounds Of Arizona Program. Jason attended Mills College in Oakland, CA and was lead alto player in the University of California Berkeley Jazz Ensemble. She completed her musical education at Berklee College in Boston.

For the past three years Jason has supported herself as a professional musician in the Phoenix area, playing in a variety of rock, salsa, jazz, and show bands as well as hearing 20 students a week, arranging, and doing studio gigs. Her group, the Sonya Jason Band, is recording a demo album.



PAUL NEVEU, 18-year-old trumpeter native of Portland, ME, is a member of the McDonald's High School

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