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Tony Williams



HYOU VIELZ

Emily Remler



JEFF THEIBAUTJH

Willem Breuker

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Cover photograph of Bill Frisell by Aldo Mauro; photograph of Tony Williams by Danny O'Connor/Studio B.

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# down beat.

For Contemporary Musicians

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## MUSICFEST U.S.A. NATIONAL FINALISTS AMONG NATIONS TOP SCHOOLS

**CHICAGO**—With the National Finals just three weeks away (April 27-30 Valley Forge PA.), the list of top high schools and colleges qualifying is growing larger and more impressive daily. Listed here are the most recent schools to qualify, preceded by (in bold type) the regional festival thru which the schools earned their invitations. For information on how to qualify, clinics being offered, and the evening concert schedule call Jim Howard at 801-944-0063.

**AQUINAS COLLEGE JAZZ FESTIVAL, GRAND RAPIDS, MI:** Grand Rapids Junior College, Grand Rapids, MI; Northview High School, Grand Rapids, MI; Grand Rapids Junior College, Grand Rapids, MI; Henry Ford Community College, Dearborn, MI; Center For Arts & Sciences, Saginaw, MI; Grand Valley State University, Allendale, MI; Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI; Siena Heights College, Adrian, MI; Lansing Community College, Lansing,

MI; Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, IL; Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI; Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, MI; Muskegon Catholic Central High School, Muskegon, MI. **BERKLEE HIGH SCHOOL JAZZ FESTIVAL, BOSTON, MA:** Nakomis Regional High School, Newport, ME; East Stroudsburg High School, East Stroudsburg, PA; Manchester High School, Manchester, CT; Brick Memorial High School, Brick, NJ; Lexington High School, Lexington, MA; Windsor Locks High School, Windsor Locks, CT; Norwalk High School, Norwalk, CT; Hall High School, West Hartford, CT; Guilford High School, Guilford, CT. **CLOVIS JAZZ FESTIVAL, CLOVIS, CA:** Roosevelt High School, Fresno, CA; Clovis West High School, Fresno, CA; Bullard High School, Fresno, CA; Kingsburg High School, Kingsburg, CA; Hoover High School, Fresno, CA; Clovis High School, Clovis, CA; Clayton Valley High School, Con-

cord, CA.

**ELMHURST JAZZ FESTIVAL, ELMHURST, IL:** North-eastern Illinois University, Chicago, IL; Ball State University, Muncie, IN; Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL; University of Mary, Bismarck, ND; University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH; Capital University, Columbus, OH. **HEMET HIGH SCHOOL JAZZ FESTIVAL, HEMET, CA:** Agoura High School, Agoura, CA; Hyde Park Junior High School, Las Vegas, NV. **JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY HIGH SCHOOL JAZZ FESTIVAL, JACKSON, MI:** St. Augustine High School, New Orleans, LA; Caddo Parish Magnet High School, Shreveport, LA; Vicksburg High School, Vicksburg, MS; Westwood High School, Memphis, TN; Huntington High School, Shreveport, LA; Provine High School, Jackson, MS. **JAZZ IN THE MEADOWS, ROLLING MEADOWS, IL:** Warren Township High School, Gurnee, IL; Glenbard South High School, Glen Ellyn, IL; Naperville Central High School, Naperville, IL; Cooper Junior High School, Buffalo Grove, IL; Libertyville High School, Libertyville, IL. **MILLIKIN UNIVERSITY JAZZ FESTIVAL,**

**DECATUR, IL:** East Richland High School, Olney, IL; Wheeling High School, Wheeling, IL; Roosevelt Middle School, Decatur, IL; Centennial High School, Champaign, IL.

**EASTERN MONTANA COLLEGE JAZZFEST, BILLINGS, MT:** Riverton High School, Riverton, WY; Powell High School, Powell, WY; Red Lodge High School, Red Lodge, MT; Moorcroft High School, Moorcroft, WY; Sheridan High School, Sheridan, WY; Billings Skyview High School, Billings, MT; Campbell County Senior High School, Gillette, WY; Billings Senior High School, Billings, MT; Billings West High School, Billings, MT. **SOUTH WEST COMMUNITY COLLEGE JAZZ FESTIVAL, CRESTON, IA:** Hoover High School, Des Moines, IA; I-35 School, Truro, IA; Kirn Jr. High School, Council Bluffs, IA; Harlan Junior High School, Harlan, IA; Ogden High School, Ogden, IA; Saydel High School, Des Moines, IA; Tri-Center Jazz 1, Neola, IA; Shelby-Tennant, Shelby, IA; Dow City Arion, Dow City, IA. **TALL-CORN JAZZ FESTIVAL, CEDAR FALLS, IA:** East St. Louis Lincoln High School, East St.

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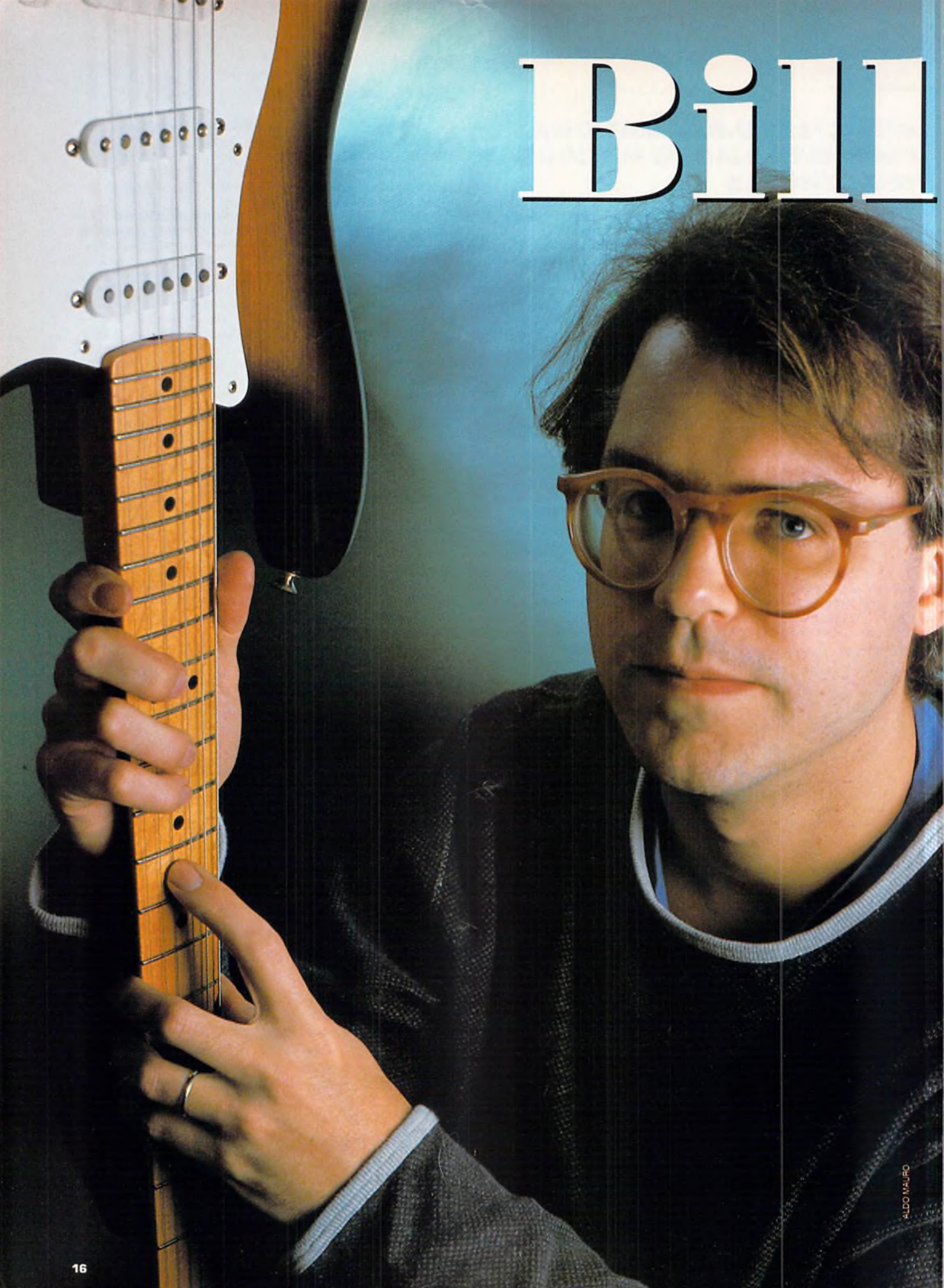


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# Bill



ALDO MAURO

# Frisell

## guitars & scatterations

**b**ill Frisell is not a very imposing stage presence. Standing across from John Zorn in his group, Naked City, shirttails hang out sloppily from his pants, a shock of hair falls over his face, and he tends to hunch slightly away from the audience, cradling his guitar as if he's protecting it, trying to hold in it's sound. But out of that guitar emerge banshee wails, fractured feedback shards that bend and twist in the air, and flurries of notes that cascade downhill, each with their own momentum.

Even if you haven't heard one of Frisell's four solo recordings, you've no doubt heard his guitar on records by Paul Motian, Paul Bley, Julius Hemphill, Lyle Mays, John Zorn, Tim Berne, Power Tools, Marc Johnson's Bass Desires, or backing Marianne Faithful. It's a range that only partly describes the circumference of Frisell's style. In only one concert with Zorn's Naked City he moves from country & western picking, to languorous blues sustains, to boppish Ornette Coleman runs to the psychedelic feedback of a Live-Skull tune.

He shares with Zorn an eclectic set of influences and tastes. "As far as guitar players, it's Jimi Hendrix, Wes Montgomery, Jim Hall," says the shy guitarist, as we sit at the kitchen table of his small Hoboken, New Jersey apartment into which he crams his wife, child, and a music room. He seems to exist in a perpetual state of embarrassment, with falling-out-of-his-mouth-like pauses in a trans-Atlantic phone connection.

"Jimi Hendrix still sounds brand new to me," he says, smiling shyly, as close as he comes to exuberant excitement. "Derek Bailey I like a lot. He's actually had a big effect on me. I'm talking about just guitar. There's a lot of other music you can play on guitar. It's such an orchestral instrument. If you get into that then it gets more complicated, from Charles Ives and Prince."

That pretty much sets the range, but it doesn't establish the distinctive sound Frisell has crafted. He's not a session guitarist chameleon. No matter what the context, there's no doubt it's him playing. "Everybody loves Bill Frisell's playing and rightly so," exudes John Zorn. "The guy is a true genius of the guitar. He works in so many different situations and while at the same time remaining himself, he changes and adapts himself. When he plays with Power Tools it's different than when he plays in his own band, which is different than when he plays with me. Which is different than with Paul

By John Diliberto

Motian. He's really one of the great musicians I think."

Frisell is one of the few electric guitarists who sounds right in an acoustic setting, without sacrificing any of his electric sound. On his new record, *Before We Were Born*, he executes a seamless crossfade between his guitar and an oboe. Alright, a sample of an oboe, but nevertheless, he adds his sound to it with sleight-of-hand dexterity.

"I really started out as a clarinet player," says Frisell, looking back to his days in Colorado, where he was born and raised. "That was my first axe and I played up through two years of college. I mean, on the guitar I started out playing rock & roll and playing loud and everything, but I also had this sensibility playing in a woodwind quartet and trying to blend in, you know, playing chamber music or whatever. So it's more just about the volume sometimes. What I did at first was try to get a sound like I was playing at an incredible volume, but make it soft enough so that I could fit in; you know you don't have to play as loud as Jimi Hendrix played."

"I shouldn't say that," he adds shyly, as if he shouldn't be comparing himself to a master. "Maybe you do have to play that loud to get that sound. I don't even know how you get that sound anyway; but some of the things that he did with the sound, it is possible to miniaturize it a little bit and make it so you could fit with acoustic instruments."

Over the last decade, he's studied at the feet of two masters of understatement, drummer Paul Motian and pianist Paul Bley. He had met guitarist Pat Metheny while

attending the Berklee School of Music in the 1970s. When Motian was looking for a guitarist after Metheny's *80/81* tour, Metheny recommended Frisell. Eight albums later, they're still together.

"It still stays new somehow," says Frisell. "There's so much depth in what he does. There aren't too many people who I've played with who always have me on edge when we play. If something's not happening, you hear about it."

Adapting to the introspective Paul Bley means playing in the spaces between the notes and letting the silence breath. It also means thinking and composing on the run.

"The first thing you hear on the record is almost the first thing we played," laughs Frisell. "We'd go in the studio and everything is ready to go and we just started improvising and that's what you hear. The first notes you hear on that *Fragments* record are some of the very first notes we played together. And since then we did a real long tour last fall and at the end of the tour we did another record. The second record [*The Paul Bley Quartet*] is really different from the first record. The kind of energy on it is different, just because we'd been travelling together and taking trains and then playing together a lot instead of not at all. And also it's completely improvised, whereas on the first record we played some songs. Every day of the tour there was never a word about what we were going to play. We just got on the stage and played every night. I hadn't really done anything like that before."

Playing every night with Bley and British saxophonist John Surman, Frisell developed the kind of intuitive interplay that makes for the best jazz performances. "Paul Bley is really committed to doing that," claims Frisell. "And the way he plays, it's not just noodling around. He's really composing, it really means something. Also with John Surman it got amazing. Sometimes we'd end up playing these melodies together, like unison melodies, we got so connected up. And the audience would think, 'Oh they're playing some composed piece.'"

Perhaps his most eccentric collaboration has been with saxophonist/composer/collagist John Zorn. Frisell has performed and recorded with Zorn for several years. With Bley, Motian, and his own music, Frisell can stretch out, developing long, flowing lines. But not with Zorn.

"Meeting him has had a strong effect on me," admits the guitarist. "Before meeting him, a big part of my music was trying to develop some idea over a long period of time. That was a big part of what I was trying to do, whether it was a standard song or playing free or thinking of some kind of compositional development over some period of time. But a big part of what he does is writing music that's based on these in-



Guitarjamming: Frisell making new music with (from left) cohorts E

credibly rapid changes so that in a matter of seconds you have to play something very clear and have some kind of character that's recognizable in a short time."

"No, he doesn't do that at all," John Zorn laughs triumphantly when I tell him this story. "Because there's no chance to do that. It's a very different kind of playing."

Zorn composed a piece for Frisell's new album called "Hard Plains Drifter or As I Take My Last Breath and The Noose Grows Tight the Incredible Events of the Last Three Days Flash Before My Eyes." "It's taken me a few weeks to kind of get it so I can remember it," Frisell sighs with relief after laboring over the title.

"There's 12 pieces of music that I gave him and then he came up with this sort of structure of like 36 sections," he says. "So there's the 12 pieces that I wrote and then there's 12 improvised sections using different combinations of duos or trios or solos within the quartet, that are pretty much just completely free sections. And then there's 12 sections that go through 12 different keys that all have some kind of a specific tempo or a groove kind of idea. So there's 36 of these sections that he arranged into some kind of order."

"Some kind of order" is right! Zorn played me a tape of the piece a few months earlier.

Sitting on the floor of his apartment he took out the file cards that are the organizational structure of "Hard Plains Drifter," flipping quickly through them as the piece jumps from r&b, to country & western, reggae, hard core, free-form squalls, and Morricone western psychedelia. Frisell shifts gears adeptly with each change, digging quickly into the meat of each section.

The title comes from an old *Twilight Zone* episode. "There's this old *Twilight Zone* and also this story that I read in elementary school," explains Frisell. "It's about this guy who's going to be hanged, right; like they put him up on the thing and then all of a sudden he gets away and he's running and he goes, you know you read this whole story and all of a sudden it ends. And then you realize that all the things that happened in the story were happening right before the noose got him. And then at the end it's kind of, it builds up to this climax and then at the end you kind of just see the guy swinging in the . . .," he breaks up in soft, hesitant laughter.

Despite citing such guitar purists as Jim Hall as influences, it's the sound of rock technology that Frisell uses to shape the notes of his guitar. He's one of those musicians who makes each note a solo unto itself, a journey into sonic shaping. He uses a





and Arto Lindsay.

PHOTO BY VEILZ

manipulate himself. It's one of the reasons why his playing is so fluid, leaping through sudden changes and shifts with such ease. Despite the maelstrom of sounds he goes through, you're never conscious of the technology making it, only of the musician playing it.

"Yeah," he agrees. "People think it's faster to have these set programs and you punch them in or whatever, but for me it's faster if I know the device and can just turn a knob. Maybe it won't come out exactly like if I had a preset but I can get close and it's somehow more organic, it's more like really playing the guitar and it can be more accurate, too. You can get closer to what you're hearing at that moment instead of punching in some preset program that you figured out before but that might not be exactly right for that particular moment. Somehow I just prefer the older style analog-type control."

After three solo albums on ECM, Frisell recently jumped to Nonesuch for *Before We Were Born*. It's a marked difference from his earlier records, which were typical ECM affairs: In the studio for two days, mix on the third day, and it's a record.

"The main difference for me doing this record was that I had so much more time," he admits. "Just for that one piece, 'Hard Plains Drifter,' we spent more time than I've ever spent on a whole record. We spent two or three days playing and then one day mixing. The record that I did before [*Lookout For Hope*] was like one-and-a-half days for the whole record."

It's a more structurally complex record, with compositions, playing, and production provided by different people among Frisell's growing coterie of musicians. Three tracks were produced by Arto Lindsay and Peter Scherer, which accounts for the rock edge and keyboard samples. Then there's a four-part suite with horns, including some gut-bucket soloing from alto saxophonist Julius Hemphill on "Love Motel."

Now, at 38 years of age, Frisell is in the enviable position of having too many options. He wants to concentrate on his own band, an intuitively virtuoso crew of drummer Joey Baron, bassist Kermit Driscoll, and cellist Hank Roberts. But that means some interesting paths get cut short. Power Tools, his heavy metal jazz trio with Ronald Shannon Jackson and Melvin Gibbs, is on hold, as is his longtime association with bassist Marc Johnson's Bass Desires, playing opposite John Scofield.

A look at his discography and the adulation of other musicians indicates that Bill Frisell has arrived; but he's still searching, trying to play that range from Ives to Prince, Jim Hall to Jimi Hendrix, trying to find sounds that inspire him. "A lot of what I do is looking around trying to find something that sounds decent," he confesses. "Whatever sound I play sort of leads me to the next sound, or note. I sort of need to be inspired by my own sound, whatever it is, whether there's no processing or a lot of processing or whatever. If I play a note and it somehow touches me somehow, if I get an emotional

limited range of effects, switching among them unconsciously on stage.

"A friend of mine in '75 gave me a volume pedal and that's the basis of the whole thing," he explains. "If I had to take away all the gadgets I have, that would be the last one I'd try to hang on to. It has a lot to do with how I shape the sound, the attack, the dynamics. So there's that and I use delays to sort of fatten things up or lengthen them."

"The guitar, if you hit the string there's basically a strong attack and the note dies away," he continues. "So with the volume pedal you can go against that principle, play the note with the volume pedal off, before you can hear and bring it in like a wind player would. Make a note get louder instead of softer. I use it like I was blowing into a horn." His solos have such a graceful logic of form and structure that British classical composer Gavin Bryars took one of them and orchestrated it.

Frisell has experimented with guitar synthesizers and MIDI controllers, especially on the guitar duo, *Smash & Scatteration* with Vernon Reid, but he seems happier with just a few devices that he can

## BILL FRISELL'S EQUIPMENT

Frisell's main guitars are a Gibson SG and Fender Stratocaster. He runs the guitar signal through a TC Electronics Compressor, a Rat Distortion Box, and a DeArmond Volume pedal. That's sent to a Boss Digital Delay Pedal and Electro-Harmonix 16-Second Delay, finally ending in an Alesis MIDIVERB. He's also experimenting with an IVL Pitchrider. His amps at home are a Music Man and a small Marshall Jubilee with one 12-inch speaker. You can also hear a Weymann banjo on his last two records, and he just bought a ukulele.

## BILL FRISELL SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

### as leader

*BEFORE WE WERE BORN*—Nonesuch 60843  
*LOOKOUT FOR HOPE*—ECM 1350  
*RAMBLER*—ECM 1287  
*IN LINE*—ECM 1241

### as co-leader

*SMASH & SCATTERATION*—Minor Music 005  
*THEORETICALLY*—Minor Music 008  
*POWER TOOLS-STRANGE MEETING*—Antilles 90627-1

### with Paul Motian

*THE STORY OF MARYAM*—Soul Note 1074  
*JACK OF CLUBS*—Soul Note 1124  
*FSALM*—ECM 1222  
*IT SHOULD'VE HAPPENED A LONG TIME AGO*—ECM 8236412  
*MISTERIOSO*—Soul Note 21174  
*MONK IN MOTIAN*—JMT 834 421-1  
*PAUL MOTIAN ON BROADWAY*—JMT 834 430

### with John Zorn

*NEWS FOR LULU*—Hat ART 6005  
*THE BIG GUNDOWN*—Nonesuch 79139-2  
*SPILL ANE*—Nonesuch 79172-2  
*COBRA*—Hat ART 2034

### with Jan Garbarek

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*WAYFARER*—ECM 1259

### with Eberhard Weber

*FLUID RUSTLE*—ECM 1137  
*LATER THAT EVENING*—ECM 1231

### with Marc Johnson's Bass Desires

*BASS DESIRES*—ECM 1299  
*SECOND SIGHT*—ECM 1351

### with Paul Bley

*FRAGMENTS*—ECM 829280-1  
*THE PAUL BLEY QUARTET I*—ECM 823 250

### with Bob Moses

*WHEN ELEPHANTS DREAM OF MUSIC*—Gramavision 8203  
*VISIT WITH THE GREAT SPIRIT*—Gramavision 8307  
*THE STORY OF MOSES*—Gramavision 18-8703-1

### with Lyle Mays

*LYLE MAYS*—Geffen 24097  
*STREET DREAMS*—Geffen 24204

### with Billy Hart

*OSHUMARE*—Gramavision 8502  
*RAH*—Gramavision 13-6802

### with others

Arild Andersen: *A MOLDE CONCERT*—ECM 1236  
 Herb Robertson Quintet: *TRANSPARENCY*—JMT 850002  
 Tim Berne: *FULTON STREET MAUL*—Columbia 40530  
 Stefan F. Winter: *THE LITTLE TRUMPET*—JMT 860007  
 Jim Staley: *MUMBO JUMBO*—Rilt 12  
 Hank Roberts: *BLACK PASTELS*—JMT 834 4161  
 Marianne Faithful: *STRANGE WEATHER*—Island 90613-1  
 Wayne Horvitz: *THE PRESIDENT*—Dossier 7528  
 Jim Pepper: *COMIN' AND GOIN'*—Antilles 9068 0-1  
 Alan Michael: *LOST IN ASIA*—Passport Jazz 66041  
 Bobby Previte: *CLAUDE S LATE MORNING*—Gramavision 188811-1  
 Ambitious Lovers: *GREED*—Virgin 90903-1  
 Robin Holcomb: *todos santos*—sound aspects 019

reaction from a note that I play, it can push me to go in a certain direction. Or if I play a note and ugh, there's nothing happening, then I'll try to play another note and it's. . . .

"There can be this sort of searching around trying to find something that inspires me or it can just take off and the whole thing will be inspired. Either one can be a valid music, somehow. Even if it's all searching."

db

# TONY WILLIAMS

## *Still, The Rhythm Magician*

By John Ephland



MICHELE CLEMENT

**“I** wouldn't change anything that I've done because it's all brought me to where I am. And where I am is a good place to be.”

Perhaps more than any drummer over the past 30 years, Tony Williams has epitomized that incessant drive towards newness of expression on his chosen instrument, the drums. For him, change has been a necessary and vital ingredient to his evolution as an artist, whether it has come through the music of Art Blakey and Max Roach, or from playing with such key figures as Sam Rivers, Gil Evans, Eric Dolphy, Jackie McLean, and Cecil Taylor.

But it was his six-year tenure with Miles Davis, beginning in 1963, that set him apart forever in the annals of jazz drumming. With cohorts Ron Carter and Herbie Hancock, Williams completed one of the greatest rhythm sections of all time. It was with Davis that his new vision for drumming was showcased: lightning-fast cymbal work, displaced accents, polyrhythmic irregularities that served as drum solos as well as rhythmic accompaniment, and a bullet snare working in tandem with a sizzling hi-hat and jabbing bass drum. Williams helped to disconnect drumming from its timekeeping role (akin to Kenny Clarke's innovations 25 years earlier), emphasizing meterless percussive sounds over a steady beat. With the Davis quintet, which included Wayne Shorter, Williams greased the wheels that

turned an exceptional band into one that became known for, among other things, their uncanny ability to listen and dialogue with one another. Perhaps most significant, Tony Williams was the percussive bridge for Davis as he moved his music beyond acoustic jazz into the various realms of electronic funk and fusion. Pioneering colleagues they were.

And since he has continued to play in a variety of musical contexts, The Tony Williams School of Drumming, as a matter of course, has included as part of its curriculum the realization “that drumming is more important than style.” This becomes very apparent when one considers his immediate forays into alternative post-'60s jazz. His musical conceptions included explosive rock rhythms and helped to set the standards for '70s jazz fusion with an assortment of new sounds; all of which involved electric music with, at one time or another, such key figures as John McLaughlin, Larry Young, Jack Bruce, and Allan Holdsworth.

As the '70s began to wind down, and into the early '80s, Williams reemerged in more trad jazz settings—playing and recording with the celebrated VSOP quintets (Miles' mid-'60s band minus Miles plus Freddie Hubbard or Wynton Marsalis), with Hank Jones and Ron Carter as a trio, and with Sonny Rollins. In 1985, he appeared in the movie *'Round Midnight*, playing alongside such jazz greats as Dexter Gordon and his fellow Davis alums as well as contributing to the soundtrack recording.

Also in '85, Williams formed a new straightahead jazz quintet that has proven to be an excellent forum for his ongoing writing and production talents in addition to his ever-growing drum work. The band has gone on to record three well-received albums and has toured worldwide on a number of occasions. Except for the change at bass of Bob Hurst for Charnett Moffett, the lineup remains Mulgrew Miller on piano, trumpeter Wallace Roney, and Billy Pierce on saxophones.

Looking rather dapper, Mr. Williams dropped hints of future excursions into the unknown—to places probably just as discontinuous as previous musical dwellings. They were hints that may prove to be windows onto other musical vistas only he knows the looks of, for now.

**JOHN EPHLAND:** *What was it that steered you in the direction to play the drums?*

**TONY WILLIAMS:** What do you mean? Drums . . . it's a great instrument. My father would take me with him to all these different engagements that he had. So, I was just drawn to the drums. I would sit in the audience when I was a kid and just watch the drummer. And I'd look at the drummer doin' what he did, and I remember the feeling I had, which was, “If *he* can do that, I know I can do that.”

**JE:** *That's something you can't teach somebody.*

**TW:** No, that's just something you know. Children are like that. They don't fear; they don't have the experience to fear things. So, when I was nine, I asked my dad one night if I could sit in with the band. And so, the first time I played the drums was in front of an audience.

**JE:** *You made important connections with Sam Rivers and Jackie McLean. Tell me about your experiences with them.*

**TW:** What happened was, Alan Dawson—the only person I took [private] lessons from, basically for reading—was teaching at

# IAMS

Berklee. I was too young to go there; and never did, actually.

**JE:** *How long a period of time was that?*

**TW:** On and off for about a year, year-and-a-half. So, there was a club that he played at, the Mt. Auburn Club 47 in Boston, in Cambridge. My dad brought me out to the club and asked him to listen to me. Alan would let me, as part of his show, sit in on a couple of tunes each night. Then a guy named Leroy Fallana, a piano player, asked me to join his band. I was about 14 or 15. He hired me, Sam Rivers, and a bass player named Jimmy Towles.

**JE:** *What kind of music did you play?*

**TW:** It was basically straightahead stuff. Leroy was more of a soul kind of Horace Silver-type of piano player. That was when I started to go around Boston by myself. I didn't need my dad to take me around anymore. I started playin' dates, playin' casuals and things like that. Then around '62—to leap, 'cause there were a lot of things happening—I had been playing in a club called Connelly's, as part of a house rhythm section; a club where they would hire a name horn player to come in from New York for a week. He would play with the house rhythm section. So this one week, Jackie McLean came to Boston. We played the weekend and during the week. He started liking the way I played and invited me to come back to New York with him. When he asked me, I said, "Yeah sure, I'd love to, but you'll have to ask my mom." He came over and said he would look out for me. She said it was okay. I lived in his house in New York for a couple of months. That was something I had wanted to do for a long time. I mean, I was dyin' to get out of Boston and get to New York. My mom's involvement and Jackie's kindness to my family really helped. I was 16 at the time. So, Jackie was the reason for me to really get to where I am. I imagine I would have gotten to New York eventually; but that was what happened. He was the link.

**JE:** *But prior to this point, you were doing some interesting things with Sam Rivers. Tell me about that.*

**TW:** When we had a band with Sam, we were doing a lot of Third Stream, which meant at the time a combination of jazz players playing avant garde music. This was the late '50s, early '60s. We were playing with this chamber group [The Boston Improvisational Ensemble], doing things in the afternoons where they had cards and numbers and you're playing to time, watches, and big clocks; playing behind poetry, all kinds of stuff. But I was also playing with trios and cocktail parties, having to do the regular kinds of things—sorority and fraternity parties. One time I played a fraternity party that was supposed to be a beach party, but it was the dead of winter; so it was indoors, in the downstairs area of the house, and they brought in all this sawdust to simulate sand on the beach. So I'm sitting there with my drums and there's the sawdust and everytime I hit the bass drum, it slides 'cause there's all this sawdust on a wood floor [laughs].

**JE:** *What were the conditions around which you moved to New York and were eventually asked to join Miles' band?*

**TW:** I guess I'd been in New York about four or five months, working with Jackie; we were playing different things around New York and Brooklyn. We played a concert at some hall in midtown Manhattan, and Miles came in with Philly Joe Jones . . . and that's where he heard me. I think Jackie had been talking to Miles and maybe he had mentioned that he had a new band and said, "Come hear the band." A month later, I got a call from Grachan Moncur, the trombone player; his girlfriend at the time was the secretary for Miles' lawyer and they were looking for me. And so, I pick up the phone and Grachan says, "Did Miles call you today? He's lookin' for you." And I said, "Yeah, sure. Right. Give me a break." He

responded, "No, really. Hang up the phone. He's trying to get in touch with you. He's in California, man." So we get off the phone and Miles ends up calling from California, and he wanted to know could we get together when he got back—he'd be back in a couple of weeks. And, I was more than happy, because at the time, Miles was my biggest influence musically. I was just in love with his music, his bands. When I was in Boston—to go back a bit—in 1960, '61, he came to Boston, and a year earlier I had met Jimmy Cobb. So when they came to town, it was my first time to see Miles Davis' band. It was the band with Hank Mobley and Wynton Kelly, Paul Chambers, and Jimmy. And so, when they did come, I asked Jimmy if I could sit in with Miles, being my usual pest again [laughs]. And he said, "You'll have to ask Miles." So, having no fear, being still basically a child, I ran up on stage after the set through the curtains to the back, and caught Miles as he was goin' somewhere. And I said, "Miles," I mean, "Mr. Davis, can I sit in with your band? I already asked Jimmy." And Miles turned around and said, "Go back, sit down, and listen." So that was the first time I met Miles.

**JE:** *At the same time, you were starting to put out some albums as a leader.*

**TW:** My first record was in '64. It was the first record that Blue Note had ever made of free, avant garde music. I think they wanted me to make a record. I wanted to make a record, and by that time, I guess, because I was so adamant about what I wanted to do, they were willing to take the chance.

**JE:** *You wanted to play free music, not the straightahead stuff?*

**TW:** Yeah. I mean, what's been important to me is to show diversity in different things, and to show different colors of things. I mean, if I'm working with a band, it sounds one way; and then I'm recording with other people and it sounds another way, then why not—if I get the chance to do something of my own—do a third thing? That makes sense to me. That's logical because it gives me a chance to, number one, show that I can do that, and secondly, it brings a fresh sound to the ear of people who have heard me do the other two things.

**JE:** *And it was consistent with some of the music you'd done before.*

**TW:** Right, before that. And, you know, when I was in Boston, playin' with Sam, one of the things that really opened my ears was the first time I heard Ornette Coleman. That first record I heard—I think it was *Change Of The Century*—was just unbelievable, the impact it made on me. This was about 1959, 1960.

**JE:** *So it planted a seed?*

**TW:** Yeah. That music was the way to go, for me, at that time.

**JE:** *It seems to be a trademark of Miles' bands over the years to let his drummers have a real strong personality. What was it like when you started playing with him? Did he guide you in your drumming?*

**TW:** He didn't say anything. I mean, he hired me because of the way I sounded; so what was there to say?

**JE:** *And you appreciated the fact that he didn't tell you what to play?*

**TW:** No, I didn't think about it. At the time I didn't notice it.

**JE:** *You just played as if it were your own band?*

**TW:** No. I played what I thought was most appropriate. And that's what I always do. I mean, if I play with Blossom Dearie, and she's singing, I'm playing behind her; I'm not playing behind, you know, Wayne Shorter. I always try to play what's appropriate for the situation.

**JE:** *If anybody's paid any attention to you, they know that.*

**TW:** Right. If you pay attention, you know that I can sound very different depending on who I'm playing with; which is what I like to do.

**JE:** *Which is different, wouldn't you say, than someone from the*

Max Roach or Art Blakey school, or the Philly Joe Jones school?

**TW:** Yeah. If you're gonna pick just one style of playing and you can only play that way, that's what you want to do. . . . I don't discourage that; but I think that drumming is more important than style. When I've given lessons or clinics, I try to emphasize that learning how to play the drums is more important than having your own style; really knowing what the drums can do and the scope and range of the instrument is more important. You know the reason I play the way I do is because when I first started playing, all I ever wanted to do was to *sound* like Max Roach, was to *sound* like Art Blakey, was to *sound* like Philly Joe Jones, was to *sound* like Louis Hayes, was to *sound* like Jimmy Cobb, was to *sound* like Roy Haynes. I really wanted to figure out why they sounded the way they did. I wasn't interested in my own style. So, I set about playing like these guys religiously, and playing their style because it was just such a wonderful, magical experience. I don't see that kind of wonder in others. I get guys comin' up to me—they just got a drum set, they've been playin' maybe four years—and they want their own style. They want to be expressive. I say, "Well then, if you want to be expressive, you gotta find out what the instrument will do. And to do that, you gotta go back and find out and get an idea of what's already been done." That's what the instrument's all about. It's the *instrument* that's more important; the quality and the magic of the instrument are more important than you are. That's one phrase I always use. You know, people use the instrument to make themselves look good. They just want to be able to tell some girl, "I'm a drummer." So anyway, it wasn't as if Miles was letting me do something. Like I said, I knew all his music, I knew every track off all his records. So, on the first date that we played, we went up and played a live date with no rehearsal; he just got the band together—Ron, George, Herbie, and myself—and we went up to, I think it was, Boden College in upstate New York, and we just stomped off the first tune. . . . That was May of '63. I think the first tune was "Walkin'." And after that first set, Miles came off stage and gave me a huge hug. . . . didn't say anything. I'll never forget that.

**JE:** What did you learn from playing with Miles?

**TW:** Well, I think basically, the things that I learned from Miles were all in the social area [*laughs*]. One of the things that is most obvious, if you've ever been in a band like Miles', is the way he lets things develop. See, the thing is, if he hires people who are really good, that's what he wants them to be; he wants them to be as good as they are and get better. Most people—I've noticed in other musicians who will remain nameless but are famous—will hire a guy that's really good, but they get upset if the *audience* thinks that they're really good. They don't see it the other way, where if the guy is getting great applause and he's making the audience happy, that reflects on the bandleader. They see it some other kind of way, some weird way, like they're being pushed aside or something; they're threatened, or competition or something. And that's the beauty, one of the wonderful things about Miles in that he *wants* those people, he hires you and gets good combinations of musicians together so that they can make this music which then again reflects on him, his judgment.

**JE:** Going a bit further, your interest in rock rhythms, as you began your departure from Miles' band, caused me to think about some of your early influences. What was it that drew you to rock music and how come jazz got in there before you could become a rhythm & blues or blues drummer?

**TW:** Good question. The reason that is is because in 1954 and '55, the only interesting things about playing music were in jazz. Jazz was more adventurous. In 1954, you had The Everly Brothers, who I loved, Frankie Lymon & The Teenagers; you had Elvis, you had all these kinds of things in the pop world. But there were no *bands*. Drumming was not something that was *exciting* in that kind of music.

**JE:** But wasn't the beat becoming more pronounced?

**TW:** No, the beat was *not* becoming more pronounced. What I'm saying is, if I wanted to be a drummer, if I wanted to *play* music, I

looked to where they were *playing* music; and that was the music of jazz, where guys are actually playing the drums and not just playing beats. Playing beats is one thing; that's not drumming. So, I'm coming home from school and listening to *American Bandstand* just like all the rest of the kids in my class. But there's no *drumming* going on. So, the way for me to get into music is to listen to this other music, where there's some interesting drumming going on. Plus, the music my father had around the house was of Count Basie, Gene Ammons, that kind of music. So, by the time the late '60s come along, the middle '60s, there's this music happening where the drums are really startin' to really *pound*.

**JE:** Who were some of the people playing then that caught your interest?

**TW:** The two biggest groups, I thought, were Cream and Jimi Hendrix's band. But before that, I was in love with The Beatles. I was a real Beatle fanatic. When I was with Miles, I had an apartment in New York with a Beatles poster up on my wall. When you walked in the front door, it was staring you right in the face. . . . And in '65, I told Miles, "Miles, we oughta do a tour with The Beatles; we oughta open up for them." He said, "What?" We were still wearing suits and ties to these gigs, and I'm telling him, we oughta be playin' with The Beatles. So anyway, the energy of the music is happening, but it's rock & roll. See, like soul music. . . .

**JE:** Like Motown?

**TW:** Yeah, like Motown. The songs were great, but it's still [*demonstrates a more fixed beat*]. In rock & roll, the guys are goin' [*demonstrates a more explosive percussive sound*]. You know, they're crashin' cymbals and so forth. But in funk and soul, it's still [*demonstrates that more measured beat*]. So, because I'm a drummer, I'm attracted more to the power kind of drumming, and the emotional kind of drumming.

**JE:** How do you assess your work from the '70s as part of the Tony Williams legacy? Were there any things you did where you felt like you were on the money more than at other times?

**TW:** I don't think I was on the money with any of it; but it's all important to me. Some of it was great, some of it wasn't. But that was an important time for me. I wouldn't change any of it. I wouldn't change the '60s. I wouldn't change anything that I've done, because it's all brought me to where I am. And where I am is a good place to be.

**JE:** I particularly liked your work with Jack Bruce and John McLaughlin, your early Lifetime band.

**TW:** What about [organist] Larry Young? Larry was the most important part of that group because he was the sound, he was the genius of the band. His sound was the sound that can't be duplicated. . . . The whole idea of that band was a throwback to the days when I was in Boston. I worked with a lot of organ trios, the Jimmy Smith-type trios. I used to work a lot with Johnny "Hammond" Smith. So, when I decided to leave Miles, I said to myself, "Why should I leave Miles and get a band that's gonna sound like Miles' band?" That seemed stupid to me. Back then, there were no bass players around that could play with the type of thing I was thinking of. So I decided to get an organ trio, and to do something to an organ trio that had never been done. So, it was, first of all, a jazz trio but playing electric music; then it was an organ trio playing some stuff that organ trios don't play. It was a number of things.

**JE:** Your current group reflects a kind of return to roots, as I see it; and yet it is entirely new. What prompted you to go in this particular direction to play more straightahead jazz? And with such fine players.

**TW:** Well, you could say it had something to do with me letting go of certain things and saying, "I'll ask somebody else who to get." I don't live in New York, so how would I know who are the best guys around? My agent helped when I started looking. The first name to come up was Mulgrew Miller. . . . I chose what I'm doing now to force me to write music. More importantly, the style the band is playing is current and is something I wanted to show, what with its currency and vitality. As a writer, I have found that it's more

prudent to go slow with a willing and ready audience. Also, not playing electric, it's less expensive and less pressurized.

**JE:** *With respect to drumming, could you explain a little about your switching to heavier sticks and bigger drum heads?*

**TW:** The bigger drums came about in the early '70s, the bigger sticks happened in the late '60s. The sticks were because, as I began to play harder. . . . It's like if you were gonna use a hammer and you got a big nail and a hard piece of wood, and you really got to hit that sucker, and you come up with this little hammer. . .

**JE:** *It's gonna take you forever.*

**TW:** It's gonna take you forever, and you don't have any help, you know? You basically need help; you need weight to get the results that you want. So anyway, I was starting to play harder, to bear down harder, 'cause I wanted to; because emotionally, it was the direction I was going in. So, I needed help, 'cause I started to play harder and I couldn't hear what I was playing because I had these little sticks, and these little drums: an 18-inch bass drum, a little cool jazz set; and I'm playing but I'm not hearin' it. So I said, "Hey, I gotta hear what I'm playin'!" So I got these big drums and I go BAM!!!

**JE:** *What about drum technique?*

**TW:** If you have the right technique, sticks don't matter. You can play as soft as you want with big sticks, you can play as loud as you want with big sticks, you can play fast or slow.

**JE:** *So stylistically, there's no difference?*

**TW:** I use the same equipment all the time, no matter what it is. I could play with Captain & Tennille with this set; I could play behind Roberta Flack. I could play with The Oak Ridge Boys. It's your technique, it's not the equipment; that's secondary.

**JE:** *Are you still studying composition?*

**TW:** Yeah. The same person in Berkeley I've been going to for awhile now, twice a week, private lessons—Dr. Robert Greenberg.

**JE:** *In your last db interview with Paul de Barros [Nov. '83], you stated, and I quote, that you "like the idea of writing lyrics, of putting images with words that evoke a scene on top of the music." What do you see out there that interests you along these lines?*

**TW:** I write lyrics and am highly affected and inspired by great lyrics, but I'm not pleased with the lyrics I've written so far. It requires a lot of time. . . . I've always been influenced by movie music, television music, music on commercials—that's one of the things that's inspired me to learn more about music. When I hear a great movie score, when I sit in a movie house and I say, "Wow! That's incredible what they did with that!"

**JE:** *Any movies you can think of offhand?*

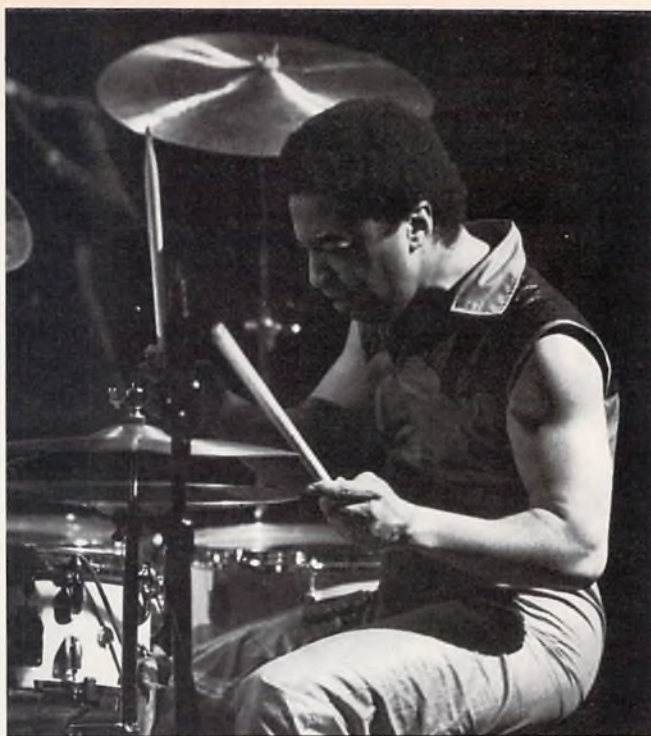
**TW:** *Blade Runner*, all the *Star Wars* music, John Williams' music. Leonard Rosenman's music, who wrote the music for *Combat*, the old television series; Lalo Schifrin, Michel Legrand, Jerry Goldsmith, Max Steiner, Dimitri Tiomkin. Visuals and dialogue with music create an incredible, total human experience. That kind of stuff inspires me. Television theme songs. It's like a hobby of mine. Anyway, those are some of the things that have inspired me to go on, to learn how to write music on a larger scale; to write in all the different forms that there are, like rondos, and theme and variations, and minuet and trio; how to write a canon, how to write invertible counterpoint. That's exciting to me.

**JE:** *Besides your work with your current band, are there any other projects in the works?*

**TW:** I'm preparing for a new electric venture/project and records.

**JE:** *As far as the current band is concerned, is anything possible?*

**TW:** Yeah, it is. Where it's going, I have no idea. I don't know, it just goes. I mean, I'm surprised by where it's gone, which is great. I look at it and think, "Jeez, this is great!" I could not have foreseen this. db



GEORGE RUBE

### TONY WILLIAMS' EQUIPMENT

"I've been playing Gretsch drums forever, since probably '58, '59. My mom bought me my first Gretsch set." His drums (with Remo heads) include a 24-inch bass drum, with heads on both sides; a 5½ × 14 snare drum, with double lugs; 14 × 14, 14 × 16, and 18 × 18 floor tom toms with black dot Remo CS heads. The floor tom toms mounted on the bass drum are a 13-inch and a 14-inch. All of his cymbals are Zildjian K's, except the hi-hat, which are A. Zildjian 15-inch heavies. To his left are an 18-inch crash, a 16-inch light ride in the middle, a 22-inch medium ride to his right, and a 20-inch medium crash on his far right.

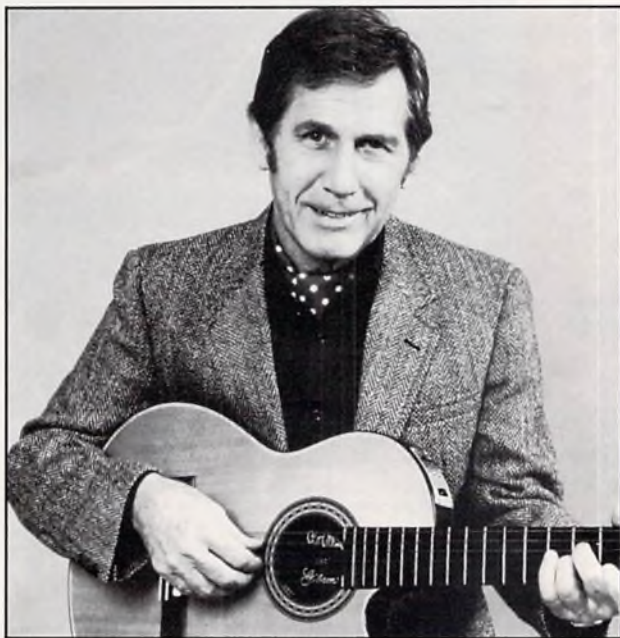
"I've got my own Tony Williams Signature Gretsch 2B wood-tipped sticks now, in addition to brushes." At home, he has been experimenting with an Emulator SP1200 sampling drum machine. ("E-mu's been good to me.") He also has an EMAX Rack Digital Sampler and an Emulator 2 keyboard.

### TONY WILLIAMS SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

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| <p><b>as a leader</b><br/> <i>ANGEL STREET</i>—Blue Note B1-48494<br/> <i>CIVILIZATION</i>—Blue Note 85138<br/> <i>FOREIGN INTRIGUE</i>—Blue Note 85119<br/> <i>THE JOY OF FLYING</i>—Columbia 35705<br/> <i>MILLION DOLLAR LEGS</i>—Columbia 34263<br/> <i>BELIEVE IT</i>—Columbia 33836<br/> <i>THE OLD BUM'S RUSH</i>—Polydor 5040<br/> <i>EGO</i>—Polydor 4065<br/> <i>ONCE IN A LIFETIME</i>—Verve 833 563-1<br/> <i>LIFETIME</i>—Blue Note 84180<br/> <i>SPRING</i>—Blue Note 84216</p> | <p><b>with Eric Dolphy</b><br/> <i>OUT TO LUNCH</i>—Blue Note 84163</p> <p><b>with Sam Rivers</b><br/> <i>FUCHSIA SWING SONG</i>—Blue Note 84184</p> <p><b>with Herbie Hancock</b><br/> <i>MAIDEN VOYAGE</i>—Blue Note 84195<br/> <i>EMPYREAN ISLES</i>—Blue Note 84175<br/> <i>MY POINT OF VIEW</i>—Blue Note 84126</p> <p><b>with Gil Evans</b><br/> <i>THERE COMES A TIME</i>—RCA/Bluebird 5783-2</p> <p><b>with Jackie McLean</b><br/> <i>ONE STEP BEYOND</i>—Blue Note 84137</p> <p><b>with Sonny Rollins</b><br/> <i>DON'T STOP THE CARNIVAL</i>—Milestone 55005<br/> <i>EASY LIVING</i>—Milestone 9080</p> <p><b>with Mulgrew Miller</b><br/> <i>THE COUNTDOWN</i>—Landmark 1519</p> <p><b>with Andrew Hill</b><br/> <i>POINT OF DEPARTURE</i>—Blue Note 84167</p> <p><b>with Kenny Dorham</b><br/> <i>UNA MAS</i>—Blue Note 84127</p> <p><b>with Wayne Shorter</b><br/> <i>THE SOOTHYSAYER</i>—Blue Note 988</p> | <p><b>with various artists</b><br/> <i>'ROUND MIDNIGHT</i>—Columbia 40464</p> <p><b>with Wynton Marsalis</b><br/> <i>WYNTON MARSALIS</i>—Columbia 37574</p> <p><b>with Miles Davis</b><br/> <i>IN A SILENT WAY</i>—Columbia 9875<br/> <i>FILLES DE KILIMANJARO</i>—Columbia 9750<br/> <i>WATER BABIES</i>—Columbia 34396<br/> <i>MILES IN THE SKY</i>—Columbia 9628<br/> <i>NEFERTITI</i>—Columbia 9594<br/> <i>SORCERER</i>—Columbia 9532<br/> <i>MILES SMILES</i>—Columbia 9401<br/> <i>E.S.P.</i>—Columbia 9150<br/> <i>MY FUNNY VALENTINE</i>—Columbia 9106<br/> <i>COOKIN' AT THE PLUGGED NICKEL</i>—Columbia 40645<br/> <i>LIVE AT THE PLUGGED NICKEL</i>—Columbia C2-38266<br/> <i>HEARD ROUND THE WORLD</i>—Columbia C2-38506<br/> <i>FOUR AND MORE</i>—Columbia 9253<br/> <i>IN EUROPE</i>—Columbia 8983<br/> <i>SEVEN STEPS TO HEAVEN</i>—Columbia 8851</p> <p><b>with Chet Baker</b><br/> <i>YOU CAN'T GO HOME AGAIN</i>—A&amp;M Horizon 726</p> <p><b>with VSOP</b><br/> <i>LIVE UNDER THE SKY</i>—Columbia 36770<br/> <i>QUINTET</i>—Columbia 34976<br/> <i>THIRD PLANE</i>—Milestone 9105</p> <p><b>with Hank Jones &amp; Ron Carter</b><br/> <i>MILESTONES</i>—Inner City 6030<br/> <i>NEW WINE IN OLD BOTTLES</i> (w/Jackie McLean)—Inner City 6029<br/> <i>AT THE VILLAGE VANGUARD</i>—Inner City 6013</p> <p><b>with Carlos Santana</b><br/> <i>THE SWING OF DELIGHT</i>—Columbia C2 36590</p> |
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# FINGER-PICKIN' GOOD

By Bill Milkowski



## CHET ATKINS

**H**e is perhaps the most famous guitar player in the world. He is certainly one of the most recorded guitarists in music history. Since 1953 he has racked up 117 albums as a leader. As a session man in Nashville, he played rockabilly licks behind The Everly Brothers and Elvis Presley, pop behind Andy Williams, country behind Red Foley, Hank Snow, and countless others. And all along the way he's kept his ears open to new sounds, new players, new modes of expression.

Back in the '60s, while he was turning out beautifully-crafted hits like "Freight Train" and "Yakety Axe," he also became the first country music artist to acknowledge The Beatles' work with his bestseller, *Chet Atkins Picks On The Beatles*.

Recently, he's turned to acknowledging the guitaristic contributions of other players in rock and pop circles. On his 1985 album, *Stay Tuned*, Chet played alongside the likes of Dire Straits' Mark Knopfler, Toto's Steve Lukather, and a host of other non-country pickers like Earl Klugh, George Benson, and Larry Carlton. On his

latest, *Chet Atkins, C.G.P.*, the production is decidedly contemporary (perhaps shockingly so for Grand Ol' Opry purists), and Knopfler is back for more.

These forays into rock and pop and the contemporary sounds of synths and sequencers and backbeats are really a natural progression for the man who has always been stretching, probing other idioms, and interpreting those modes through his own signature approach to the instrument. All along, he has demonstrated great aptitude on styles as diverse as flamenco, jazz, classical, country, and rock. And in each context he remains Chet Atkins, the quintessential Country Guitar Picker.

Chet's signature fingerstyle is something he developed quite naturally and without example while growing up in the backwoods of Luttrell, Tennessee, a mountain community east of Knoxville, "about 70 miles down the road from where Loretta Lynn is from," he explains.

"My style of fingerpicking," he continues, "evolved because I was way out in the sticks and didn't hear anyone. That's usually the guy who comes up with something different. A lot of times it's the guy who doesn't know any better and he just goes about it in such an unorthodox way that he actually discovers something new.

"Like Thumbs Carlisle, who plays the guitar on his lap. He told me he thought that was the way you were supposed to play it, like a steel guitar. And they call him Thumbs because he plays with a thumb pick and fingers and makes the notes with his left thumb . . . fast as lightning. There have been several people who accidentally played the guitar in an unorthodox way because they didn't know any better. Stanley Jordan is another one. And that's the way it was for me.

"I used to play by myself all the time but I never got to see anybody else to actually see how it was done. I mean, I was from so far back in the sticks, I didn't know *anything* of the world. I didn't know how to dress. I didn't know how to order food from a restaurant. I was very ignorant. Guess I still am, 'cause I'm still learning things."

The guitarist who first made a big impression on him was Merle Travis. He'd listen to Merle's distinctive thumb-and-finger picking style over the radio and try to copy that sound. "But I didn't see his fingers so I didn't know he was playing with just one finger and a thumb. I started fooling around with three fingers and a thumb, which turned out to be this pseudoclassical style that I stuck with. So I guess I was lucky that I didn't see him and copy him any more than I did.

"Yeah, I've always been just me," he says with a laugh. "I've always played what I liked, and fortunately there have been enough people out there to buy a few records and keep me in business."

## JOE SATRIANI

**R**ight now, Joe Satriani is sittin' on top of the world. On the strength of his 1987 album, *Surfing With The Alien*, and his 1988 tour as lead guitarist in Mick Jagger's new band, Joe has become *the* guitar hero for a new



generation of rock players. And while there are seemingly countless rock guitar gods out there today, Joe's approach to phrasing and arranging his solos sets him apart from all the heavy metal flash players who merely rely on sheer speed and tricky licks to get by.

In short, Joe Satriani is an intelligent guitar player of depth and emotion, a rare commodity in these MTV times when looks mean more than the music.

"So many kids today can do all the scales and arpeggios and speed licks, but they can't phrase," says Joe. "So it all sounds very much the same until you learn about phrasing. It all comes down to editing and phrasing . . . what you choose to leave out, when you choose to enter and exit. I edit myself incredibly as far as melodies go.

"There's one song I do, for instance, called 'Always With You,' which is probably the most delicate thing I had ever set up before. It took me days to really lock into it, to where I thought I was approaching it the right way and not overdoing it, just blowing chops all over it. That would've killed it. And it took a lot of care, a lot of editing to make sure I didn't overdo it.

"So I'll do that in the studio . . . kinda sit back and think about it for a while—'Is this too much? Am I just showing off here?' Sometimes it really helps to step back and analyze your performance. It's almost like a painting or a novel or any other kind of thing you're creating. You have to think about balance and a lot of other things that come into play."

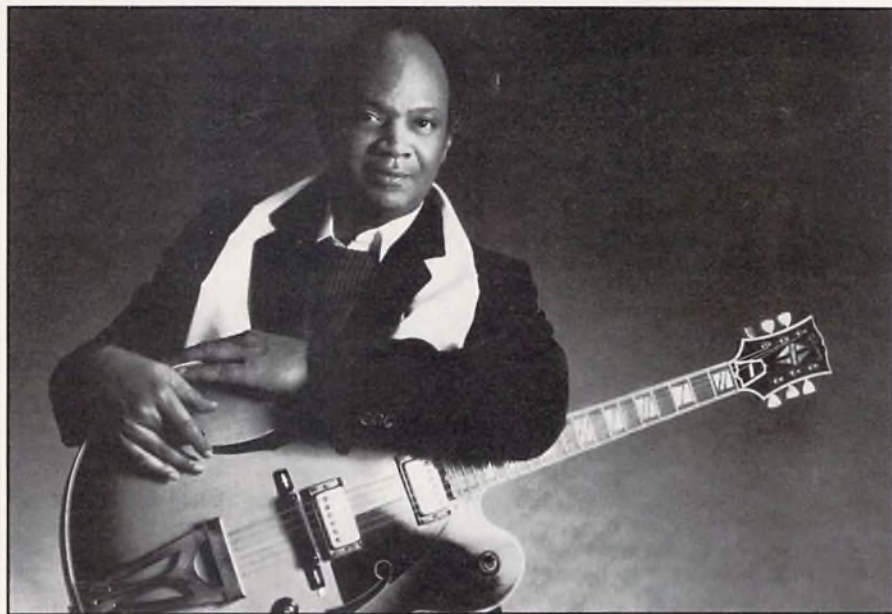
Sage advice for young players burdened with awesome technique and having very little to really say. Satriani grew up on Long Island and began teaching guitar to a few kids at Carle Place High School, one of which was Steve Vai, another of today's hottest rock virtuosos. After a prolonged bout of wanderlust, which had him spending six months in Japan, Joe eventually settled in Berkeley, California, where he started a power pop trio called The Squares. "We were kind of like a cross between The Everly Brothers and Van Halen," he says. "We were always just that short of a record deal, and we kept at it for about five years. But after all that time invested and no record to show for it, the whole thing just started getting stale. It was getting too depressing trying to get record company people to listen to us, so I just figured I'd check out of that scene and do something crazy like cut a record myself . . . just an exploration of a lot of things I had picked up over the years: funk, the two-handed tapping thing, melodic chord soloing, and all the things I liked to do on my own when I wasn't busy pursuing a career in pop music."

The result was *Not Of This Earth*, a kind of stylistic sampler that caught some critical acclaim in guitar circles. The subsequent breakthrough album, *Surfing With The Alien*, crystallizes his approach while communicating to listeners other

than guitar fanatics.

While Satriani grew up with the usual guitar inspirations—Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck, Jimi Hendrix, Johnny Winter, Mike Bloomfield—he gained some valuable insights into music with a capital M from legendary bop pianist Lennie Tristano. "Those lessons I took with him over at his house were very inspiring," he recalls. "He taught me ear training by making me sing

sax solos along with the records. And he had this great approach to practicing on your own. He'd say, 'Practice with a nudity, a blankness. Have no style when you practice. And when you play, don't think, don't be judgmental. Go crazy, do whatever you want.' And he also used to say, 'Never be in the subjunctive . . . "I could've done this or should've done that." Just play.' And I took those words to heart."



JIM HOUGHTON

## ERIC GALE

"I've never really listened to other guitar players," admits Eric Gale. "I could always learn

much more listening to saxophonists such as John Coltrane, Dexter Gordon, King Curtis, and an old favorite of mine, Chu Berry." Perhaps his unwillingness to study his contemporaries partly explains the 50-year-old guitarist's distinctive sound; after all, trumpeter Roy Eldridge developed his own style by copying the solos of tenor great Coleman Hawkins.

Few of Gale's many fans probably realize that his first instrument was the string bass. "I just got tired of taking the bass on the subway. It was easy to switch to guitar since I already knew the fingering of the bass." Although he seriously considered having a career as a chemist, by the early '60s the largely self-taught Gale was a full-time musician.

After starting out on the r&b circuit, Gale graduated to the studios where his versatility became very valuable. Soon he was being called for a remarkable variety of recordings (often three sessions a day) ranging from soul, funk, jazz, pop, reggae, and rock to anonymous commercial studio dates. Twenty-five years later, does the

guitarist ever find it difficult to switch between such diverse musical assignments as a Michael Jackson album, a TV commercial, and a date with Tom Scott? "No, not at all; it's easy. I play whatever is required to make good music. If it's needed on the date then I do it, just like a computer would, contributing my sound to the music." When asked to name a few of his own personal favorite recordings, Gale stated, "I never listen to my old stuff so it'd be hard to remember and pick. I suppose the early dates with Grover Washington Jr. [*Inner City Blues*, *All The King's Horses*, and *Mister Magic*]. I never look back."

Now a regular member of *The Pat Sajak Show's* studio orchestra, Gale has kept typically busy with a countless number of sessions, two tours in Japan, and work on his two recent albums, *Let's Stay Together* (A Artful Balance) and the straightahead *In A Jazz Tradition* (EmArcy), which features Houston Person, Lonnie Smith, Ron Carter, and Grady Tate. Gale, who swears by Gibson guitars (alternating between the L4 model and a Les Paul), hopes to record with a big band in the near future and possibly tour with a larger unit. His matter-of-fact approach towards the diverse musical styles that he is constantly faced with is summed up succinctly: "I've been playing all of my life and I still enjoy learning everyday." —scott yanow

# VERNON REID

Like many young aspiring musicians, Vernon Reid had his share of bands that did more rehearsing than gigging.

That was back in the late '70s. Now it's the late '80s and Reid is emerging as a true guitar hero for the MTV generation. His band Living Colour, which fuses funk, pop, and heavy metal into a heady blend of socio-political party music, has become a major attraction on the strength of its Epic debut, *Vivid*, while Reid's clever amalgam of raucous power chording, two-handed tapping, whammy bar theatrics, blues-drenched wailing, and bebop phrasing has garnered him cover stories in guitar magazines around the world.

Born in England in 1958 and raised in Brooklyn, Reid started out playing in high school bands that covered material by Buddy Miles, Kool & The Gang, and Parliament-Funkadelic. He formed his first originals band, Point Of View, in 1976 with high school pal, bassist Melvin Gibbs.

After some disappointment with a band called Stepping Stone (which was oh-so-close to being signed to a record deal), Reid began concentrating on writing pop material. That endeavor was interrupted in mid-'79 when he got an audition with The Decoding Society, the harmolodic jazz group formed by drummer Ronald Shannon Jackson. Reid's relationship with The Decoding Society was a fruitful one. From '79 to '84 he logged several world tours with the group and recorded five albums. His piercing Hendrixian forays on guitar made him a standout of that adventurous



# EMILY REMLER

Like most players of her generation, 30-year-old Emily Remler started out strumming folk tunes and later began copping rock licks before she finally discovered jazz at the Berklee College of Music.

"I didn't particularly like jazz when I began playing at age 14," she says. "I couldn't hear what was happening in it. When I came to Berklee at age 16 I never really heard much jazz at all except for one Dave Brubeck record, *Time Out*. I could sort of understand what Paul Desmond was doing on that. But then a friend of mine up there, Chuck Loeb, told me, 'You have to hear Wes Montgomery and Pat Martino.' He gave me a bunch of records and I got really excited about jazz right away."

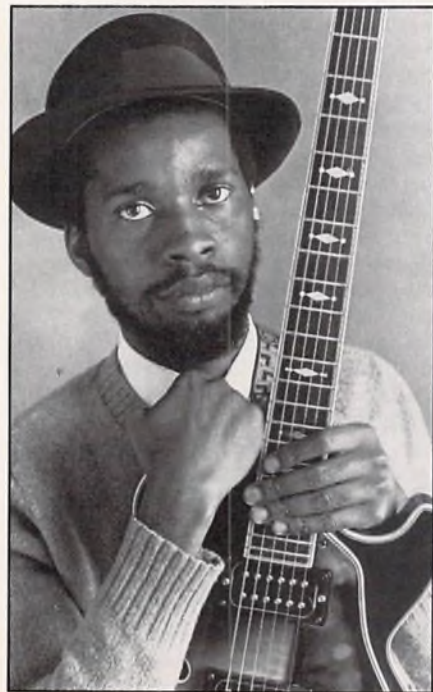
Emily set a goal for herself while at Berklee: To be able to play standards all the way through from beginning to end all by herself. She achieved that goal, then headed down to New Orleans to get some on-the-job training. "But before I went down there, I spent two months just practicing what I had learned at Berklee. I went into a real discipline trip. I moved

down to the New Jersey shore and rented a room and just did an intensive woodshed."

For three years in New Orleans she played every gig imaginable and did a lot of jamming on the side with the likes of Wynton Marsalis and Bobby McFerrin. "I did weddings, shows, bar mitzvahs, club dates . . . anything I could grab to get more experience. I was very determined to be the best guitarist I could be. And gradually, everything started happening. My rhythm got better, my concentration improved, and so did my confidence."

After that three-year stint in the Crescent City, Emily returned to New York and began seeking out other musicians to play with. And she began to notice that the challenge of playing with better musicians took her own skills up a notch. She made her debut with Concord Jazz in 1982, playing mostly standards on *Firefly*. She began working on more of her own material on *Take Two* and *Transitions*, and now on her latest for Concord, *East To Wes*, she's paying homage to the guitarist who first caught her ear and headed her down this jazz path.

"I've been real fortunate my whole career," says Emily. "I've been able to play with great musicians; the record company pursued me, I didn't have to go around hustling demo tapes. I just keep going with the flow and try to be as good as I can."



ANDY FREEBERG



unit.

The first edition of Living Colour was formed in 1984 and the band has since taken a turn toward the crossover pop market. Reid also gained some added notoriety in 1987 for playing on Mick Jagger's second solo album, *Primitive Cool*. Mick returned the favor last year by producing one cut on *Vivid*.

Though Reid greatly admires guitarists like Jimi Hendrix, Carlos Santana, Wes Montgomery, George Benson, and Albert Collins, he is quick to point out that he idolizes no musician. "Hendrix had a big effect on me and a whole generation of

black progressive guitarists who came along since his death. I do love Jimi's playing but he's not my idol. I think idolization is very dangerous, especially for young players. These powerful, self-realized players are like magnets to young musicians, so there's always that tendency to slip into sheer mimicry. Young players are so susceptible to this. So you have to listen, yet not listen. Expose yourself to these masters, yet never fall into the trap of mimicry. 'Cause you gotta find your own way of doing things."

Before finding his own way, Reid was torn between two paths. An avid interest

in art throughout high school had him seriously considering a career in commercial art, though he also had a great interest in music at the same time.

"It was a big conflict for me," he recalls. "I had gotten an acoustic Hummingbird guitar when I was 15 years old and I was figuring out a few things on that, but it was really a struggle. It had thick strings and I wasn't aware of thinner gauge strings at the time. At one point I stopped playing altogether because it was just too painful for me. I was all set to give it up and go back to art school, but later decided to give it just one more shot."

## LEE RITENOUR

**L**ee Ritenour once told **down beat**: "It's unbelievable what's happening in the music world with the innovations in equipment. It's revolutionary, and there's a lot of great music being made on these devices. It's forward, not backward, and that excites me. I've always liked to keep moving. That's the most important thing for me. That's what keeps me fresh."

Ritenour's been moving forward since leaving the lucrative studio scene in Los Angeles to launch his solo career in 1977. Along the way he's pioneered the use of several bits of technology, including the Synthaxe and the new Yamaha GM-10 MIDI controller. He currently composes on an Atari ST-1040 computer with Hybrid Arts music software in conjunction with the Takamine acoustic guitar synth and the new Yamaha G-10 digital controller, though he's mindful of balancing the high-tech with the irrepressible human feel and soul he can wring out of his trusty old '54 Fender Stratocaster or his Yamaha nylon-stringed classical guitar.

"What I'll usually do at the beginning of each album project, I'll look around for whatever's the latest technology . . . gear, effects, computers, or whatever is going on at the moment that I think could help me musically, and that will give me a spark to change my head a little bit, to create some excitement, to make me grow. So I'll do a bunch of research on that stuff, whatever it might be. Ultimately, how much I use on the album is another thing. The technology is really a fantastic way to prepare and write your music and learn about it. Then to turn it loose with the real musicians in the studio is, for me, the perfect blend."

Ritenour introduced the guitar synthesizer on his 1977 album, *Captain Fingers* (Epic), then 10 years later introduced the Synthaxe MIDI controller on his *Earth Run* album for GRP. Last year he returned to the basics of Brazilian bossas and sambas on *Festival*, an album which harkened back to his 1979 *Rio* album



HYOU VIELZ

for Elektra/Musician.

"That's something I'll always return to," says Ritenour. "While I do have an ongoing interest in all the technological innovations that come along from year to year, I also have an ongoing love affair for Brazilian music. I kind of got it in my blood when I was a teenager. I'm not sure exactly how. I guess I was attracted to the great songs, the great melodies of people like Milton Nascimento and Antonio Carlos Jobim. I went down there in 1974 on tour with Sergio Mendes and that whole experience really unlocked a lot of feeling inside of me."

He continues to blend that feeling with the latest state-of-the-art technology on tour and on records. He's come a long way from the studios of Los Angeles, where his prodigious session output earned him the nickname Captain Fingers.

"Back in the '70s, I had a whole other career. I was groomed to become a studio musician and that's what I was almost exclusively during the mid-'70s. I was doing three, four sessions a day . . . pop, rock, jazz, you name it. So it really took me a long time to get out of that mode. I

had to really grow into my own voice. And I had to work at becoming a strong frontman. Now I feel comfortable being the leader. I feel comfortable having the lead sound and I really didn't around the first few albums I did, basically because I had that session man mentality of providing what's needed for somebody else.

"So I've grown in a lot of areas, but I think probably the main growth is as a producer. I really know how to design albums from the bottom to the top. I really felt the last few years that I've come into my own as a producer, arranger, and writer. For so many years a lot of what I was doing was like the blind leading the blind. I was hindered by a lack of knowledge sometimes about how to get something done soundwise within a framework.

"There's really so much to learn, aside from learning your instrument. And you learn something new with each project that you do. I'm still learning things and I'll always be open to checking out new ways. You really never stop learning, not if you're gonna last and have a good career." **db**

# WILLEM BREUKER, & KOMPANY

## EURO-BOP, WITH A TWIST

By Michael Bourne

**T**here was just space enough. Stretched across the front of the bandstand they played shoulder-to-shoulder—two trombones, two trumpets, and the three saxophones of The Willem Breuker Kollektief. Behind them was the rhythm section. Altogether at The Knitting Factory, The WBK was enjoying the New York stop of a seven-week 1988 tour.

There wasn't space enough for the audience. Even at 3 a.m. it was SRO. Breuker himself—saxophonist/clarinetist, composer/arranger, and leader of the Kollektief—played up against a wall, overlooked all night by a painting, the Modigliani-like face of a woman. Breuker looked back, from time to time talked to the woman, offered the woman a beer, and at the last they even danced.

Breuker's band is from Wonderland—from Holland, actually, but nonetheless musically curiouser and curiouser. Though the Kollektief might be said to resemble the Arkestra or Duke's band, a chamber band or a circus band, even Spike Jones, they're all of the above and then some, a uniquely musical and quite theatrical cornucopia. They're renowned in Europe but haven't played the U.S. much—though American and world critics alike voted Breuker top Composer and Arranger as Talent Deserving Wider Recognition in the 1988 **db** International Critics Poll; likewise the Kollektief as the TDWR big band. Last year's American tour was the fourth since Breuker first fronted the Kollektief (or Collective as we'd call it this side of the water) in 1974.

They opened at The Knitting Factory with "Overture Majestic," a fanfare that just about blew down the house, then jumped into a swinging riff. It's not unusual for Breuker's melodically variegated music to amazingly (and amusingly) shift gears from hot to cool, from the bombastic to the beautiful, with often flabbergasting finesse—even while doing *The Wave*. Everyone is spotlighted, both musically and theatrically, and even when they're clowning they're all virtuosos.

Andy Altenfelder, one of Breuker's two extraordinary trumpet masters, disappeared while the band played on, only to return topless (except for a fez) and play, klezmer-ish, a whirling dervish of a solo. And while the others Arabically squatted around, all with heads burnoosed (by towels mostly), Breuker dumped out a sack of percussion for them all to play—a "Sahara Sack," one presumes, that being the title of Altenfelder's feature.

When it was Breuker's own turn, he played a juggernaut of soprano sax, if only in musical self-defense. Rob Verdurmen, the band's indefatigable drummer, again and again exploded, his drums louder and crazier—until the others snatched away his cymbals. Breuker never relented, not even when the others also exploded, riffing like mad—until, as if by the twist of a kaleidoscope, they all at once were playing "Besame Mucho" as

Breuker tango'd with the painting. And if that were not enough, for an encore pianist Henk de Jonge played "Tip-toe Through (what else, being Dutch?) The Tulips"—until The WBK yet again exploded with some Nether/Dixieland and even tap danced.

"We started this tour in Mexico," said Breuker, "and it was really nice. They didn't know what to expect. 'What's this?,' they said. I like it when we have a new audience."

I'd heard of, but never heard, the Kollektief before the North Sea festival in The Hague in 1986. While one usually meanders from concert to concert at North Sea, I stayed for the whole of Breuker's set—and the same the following years. They played a special concert at North Sea '88 when Breuker was voted the "Bird" Award (named for Charlie Parker) as Dutch jazz musician of the year. I was all the more delighted at North Sea '87 when, along with the usual Kollektief fun, they were joined by strings for a tribute to Gershwin. And though I'd expected Breuker to "spike" Gershwin, instead they played the music almost classically, especially *Rhapsody In Blue* with Henk de Jonge the soloist.

"Gershwin is a very original composer," said Breuker. "Most of the time Gershwin music is so lousily played. It's [*Rhapsody*] mostly played by classical musicians like it's a piano concerto by Schumann. And most jazz musicians don't have the technique for it. Henk can play it."

When featured at The Knitting Factory, de Jonge played a solo that, at first, showed off his conservatory years with some classical-sounding variations. Yet almost at once his stream of consciousness overflowed, from bop to stride, from Cecil Taylor to Liberace. "All the music of my life," de Jonge said. "Classical, jazz, cabaret, spirituals, opera, everything, I can play with this band. In my solos I can play everything. This is all the music there is. There is no music we don't play. It's not easy. It's very difficult—but it's fun."

**B**reuker is featured with The Henk de Jonge Trio on a recent release from Breuker's own label, BVHAAS. It's all de Jonge originals, musically what might be called Euro-bop: often straightahead but with twists. He's recorded Gershwin piano preludes on the album with *Rhapsody In Blue* and arranged Gershwin's ballet *An American In Paris* on the band's compact disc with violinist Vera Beths and The Mondriaan Strings, a recording that features several Gershwin classics and, among other music, Breuker's *Bob's Gallery*, the other new WBK CD, again features Breuker originals having the usual variety, with among other music, the song "I Don't Love You" by another composer Breuker appreciates, Kurt Weill.

Breuker's fusion of music and theatre is not unlike Weill's, especially politically, though he was already working in the theatre before he knew Weill's works. "I was always interested in theatre," said Breuker, "and the music I was making always had some theatrical aspects. So when music became my profession, when I was about 20, people started asking me, 'Would you like to write some music for our play or our film?' And I started to write my own plays—text, music, everything; often about the musical and political situation in Holland. Working in the theatre gave me the chance to develop new musical elements."

One of Breuker's many theatre pieces, *Dirty Laundry*, featured the Kollektief and was both political and popular. "*Dirty Laundry* was the name of a ship. We had in Holland at that time [1980] a terrible movement to present Dutch art outside the country. They'd send Dutch musicians to Arabia but they were playing Mozart. They were Dutch only by nationality. And the government gave money to these kinds of projects. So in the play I write to the Minister of Culture. We want also to tour the world, but with our music." They eventually tour in the wreck of *Dirty Laundry* and after several misadventures end up being blown up by Dutch marines when the government commands



LAUREN DEUTSCH

Breuker blows amidst Kommunity vibrations.

them to play South Africa and the musicians refuse. "We were not so nice to the government—and they paid for it!"

Dealing with the government and the often ridiculous politics of being an artist is nothing new to Breuker. "In 1970 a couple of colleagues and I took over The Dutch Foundation for Jazz and Improvised Music. We went to the government and said 'We need some money. You give money to classical musicians. Why don't you give some to us? We also have to live. We also want to make music.' It took us many years to get support. I had to buy new shoes many times to go to The Hague and talk to these government people over and over again to get the grants." He was the Foundation's chairman until 1986 and through the years was also involved with BIM, the Dutch musicians union.

Being a musical politician was not the ideal life for Willem Breuker—and even now he's not certain that being a musician at all is ideal. "I was always mad about music, but I never thought about being a professional—and I still don't know if I am a musician. Every day music is strange and new to me. Most musicians make their music with a certain mentality that is not my mentality. They're actually not interested in music. It's just a craft, like being a very good painter or carpenter. In the classical field you see so many musicians, nicely trained musicians, but they're not really interested in the music. They're like the engine of a washing machine. They're mechanical."

So, then, what is music, after all, for Willem Breuker?

"I think music is my life."

**B**orn in Amsterdam in 1944, Breuker grew up in the trying years of reconstruction after World War II. Breuker's one passion was music. "All day I'd hear music. I was mad about music so I'd listen to the radio as much as possible. There was the barrel organ in the street, and opposite to our house a band rehearsed once a week. The first jazz I heard was The Dutch Swing College Band. They're still around. They were on the radio once a week. There was another group, the Ger van Leeuwen group, and the saxophone player was Piet Noordijk. And sometimes I'd skip school to listen to the radio. I remember when I wanted to listen to Schoenberg. My first records were two string quartets by Schoenberg. I heard Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington when they came to Amsterdam, but that was later. I'd already played my first concert when I was 14."

Breuker's music is, to say the least, eclectic—but jazz is a mainstay. "That has to do with the improvisational part of it. I was doing my clarinet studies—I started when I was 11—but I was too lazy to turn the page, so I'd play to the end of a page and then continue, improvising. That was the beginning. I started when I was 12 to make my own compositions."

Eventually he became one of the leading progressives of the musical and theatrical scene around Holland. During the '60s he worked with vibraharpist Gunter Hampel (and was featured on a Flying Dutchman release in the U.S.). He played with the Peter Brötzmann band and, with pianist Misha Mengelberg and drummer Han Bennink, created an earlier collective called The Instant Composers Pool. After quarreling with some of the others involved he quit the Pool in 1974 and renamed the Pool band he was fronting The Willem Breuker Kollektief. And it's exactly that, a collective, both musically and economically.

"We don't have competition in the band. I don't want to play better than anyone else. Everybody tries his best and that's it. Everybody has his own thing to do. Most of the time when a guy is soloing everybody is interested. What you see so often on stage in bands, if a guy is soloing, everybody else is just standing or drinking or smoking, not interested. There's not really the unity, the same ideal. Everybody in the Kollektief knows exactly what we're doing and what we want to do. There's respect. And we all earn the same. We just have to divide the money by 10."

They all have other gigs—jazz gigs, classical gigs, working in the theatre and movies, teaching—but most, like trombonist Bernard Hunnekink, have worked with Breuker for years. "I've played with Willem since 1964," said bassist Arjen Gorter, "with the Kollektief almost from the beginning. And even after all these years it's always fresh. There's all this energy. There's a zillion ways to play this music. In every group I've been in there was a time when I wanted to do something else. That's never happened with the Kollektief."

Gorter and drummer Ron Verdurmen play virtually non-stop. "They have to play all the time," said Breuker, especially the dynamo at the drums. "Rob is a fantastic drummer. He has very strong time. He keeps the thing together." Verdurmen is also one of the especially energetic clowns with the Kollektief—drumming for a time at The Knitting Factory with bread or playing along with the band's trumpeting Laurel and Hardy, Boy Raaymakers and Andy Altenfelder. "It's rare to find musicians who can be theatrical," said Breuker. "So many things happen on stage. Some things we choreograph and rehearse, but it's all very open."

**B**reuker sometimes plays Follow The Leader, soloing while rolling, kicking, and climbing about the stage with the Kollektief following likewise. During one of the North Sea concerts, while Henk de Jonge was soloing, Breuker improvised, in effect, a solo on a towel. "I was sweating," said Breuker. "It happens." After cleaning his face, Breuker started wackily folding. "First you put the towel together nicely, like your mother did. Then what can you do? You make a hat out of it. You do stupid things with it. Then at the end you put it over Henk's head. He just continues playing. Sometimes we do these things very small, so the audience doesn't know where to look. 'Do we listen to the piano player? And what's that one doing?' Everyone in the



JEFF THEBAULTY

### WILLEM BREUKER'S EQUIPMENT

Breuker plays Selmer horns—soprano, alto, and tenor saxophones, B-flat, E-flat, and bass clarinets, with Selmer or Berg-Larson mouthpieces and Rico Royal #4 reeds.

### WILLEM BREUKER'S SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

#### with the Kollektief

BOB'S GALLERY—BVHAAST CD 8801  
 WBK/VERA BETHSIMONDRIAN STRINGS  
 —BVHAAST CD 8802  
 WBK IN PARIS—Marge 05  
 WBK IN BERLIN—BVHAAST 008  
 WBK IN HOLLAND—BVHAAST 041/042  
 RHAPSODY IN BLUE—BVHAAST 044  
 DRIEBERGEN-ZEIST—BVHAAST 050  
 WBK IN NEW YORK—About Time 1006

#### for theatre and movies

BAAL BRECHT BREUKER—BVHAAST  
 003  
 DRUMS IN THE NIGHT—BVHAAST 013  
 MUSIC FOR FILMS—BVHAAST 015  
 DOODZONDE—BVHAAST 021

#### with Han Bennink

THE NEW ACOUSTIC SWING DUO—ICP  
 001

#### with Henk de Jonge

THE HENK DE JONGE TRIO FEATURING  
 WILLEM BREUKER—BVHAAST 058

band is looking at Henk's fingers. 'Are they really interested in what he's playing or are they fooling him? What's happening?' I once saw a videotape when I was improvising. I saw for the first time what they were doing behind me. It was really funny."

Altenfelder and Raaymakers clown the most. While someone else was soloing at North Sea, they appeared in the audience, dressed as typical American tourists, complete with cameras and baseball caps, glad-handing everyone and shooting snaps. Joined by tenor saxist Peter Barkema at The Knitting Factory, they leaped onto the stage in black tights (with red suspenders and green bow ties) and tumbled. All of them dressed as beats in black sweaters and berets and shades for "Jazz II," a feature for Raaymakers with a quintet sounding like a Blue Note band round about midnight. "This is what I always wanted to do," said Raaymakers, "the music, the theatre."

And what does Raaymakers especially appreciate about Breuker himself? "I like his hair."

What inspires Altenfelder, the one German in the band, is that the Kollektief is so . . . collective. "I enjoy playing together with everyone more than playing my solos, feeling something to my right and to my left. It's the same in life, everyone being together. This is very important to me."

That a gathering of musicians so masterful comes together is a testament to Breuker's feeling for the Ellingtonian ideal as an orchestrator. "When I compose for the Kollektief I always put the names of the musicians in front of the line, never the

instruments. I have the musicians in mind. I know what they can play. That's what Duke Ellington did, too. Andy is very good playing high. Boy is very good playing low. Andy is more of a section leader. Boy can improvise more in the jazz way. Everybody has his specialty."

Andre Goudbeek, the band's alto saxist, specializes in free-flying avant-romps, often a cappella. "If I'm listening to a guy," said Breuker, "and he's very good at what he's doing, I let him go. We have many possibilities in one piece to choose. We can do different things. Sometimes an eye from me is enough. Everybody knows what's happening."

Even when they're fooling around, the music exhilarates. And it's not all vaudeville. They play Gershwin basically straight, though with great charm; also a variety of music other than Breuker's: music of Ellington and Weill, Ennio Morricone ("The Good, The Bad, And The Ugly"), Reginald Forsythe ("Serenade To A Wealthy Widow"), Prokofiev (a dance from *Romeo And Juliet*), even 18th century Dutch composer Unico Wilhelm graaf van Wassenaer.

Though jazz generates much of the spirit of The WBK, "I don't really call it a jazz band," said Breuker, ever the omni-musician. "It's human being music. It's for everybody, the very young, the very old; and you see that in our public, all the different people showing up." That was so at The Knitting Factory with tank tops and jeans squeezed together with suits—and everyone enjoying the show. "This is what I always wanted."

They play about a hundred concerts every year, including a festival every year in Amsterdam from Christmas through New Year's Eve. They were commissioned by the German city of Bielefeld to organize a city-wide festival in 1985. They worked with jazz bands, marching bands, cheerleaders, folk groups, rock groups, the zoo, and even the sanitation workers. They'll do the same this year in Dusseldorf. And they'll cross the Atlantic again this year from October 19th through November 19th, starting at Otterbein College in Westerville, Ohio, and thereafter playing around the U.S. and Canada, plus some fun and sun in the Netherlands Antilles.

When not working with The WBK, WB himself is otherwise involved. Among other gigs last year, Breuker joined drummer Han Bennink and cellist Ernst Reijseger for what Breuker's American agent Hope Carr called "old-fashioned European improvised music"—often goofy yet always intense—during The Total Music Meeting opposite Jazzfest Berlin. He's composed more than 250 works: orchestral, chamber, marching, and Kollektief works, also works for carillon. He's featured on more than a hundred recordings, and now is directing his own label, BVHAAST. "It's easier with your own label. You just have to know how much it costs. You pay your invoices and then you're completely free to do what you want to do. If you're with a certain label they tell you what to do. That's no good for the music. The distribution is the most difficult part. I export records to Japan, Europe, the U.S. through Cadence [see *New Releases/Mail Order Sources*, p. 57]. It's limited but people find it. We don't do only our music on the label but also music I like from other people. It can be jazz, classical, new Dutch groups."

Whether or not he's successful is not so great a concern for Breuker. "I'm more interested in performing for people and doing my work as good as I can. That's always the problem. Where are the new ideas? How do you continue writing? I'm not so interested in success. I'm more interested whether I'll be lucky to be able to do the things I'm doing. I have to live with this every day. I don't feel free. I have a lot of responsibilities, but I can do with music what I want. I can travel all over the world, and that is not possible for everyone."

There's not much else Breuker wants to do. "I sleep with music and wake up with music. Sometimes I hate music because it takes up so much of my time. The most important thing is to never make it routine. I have one life and this is what I've always wanted to do—although I still don't know if I'm a musician. Someone else will have to tell me."

"You're a musician," I said.

"Okay," said Willem Breuker.

db

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



## VARIOUS ARTISTS

**THE NEW NEW ORLEANS MUSIC: JUMP JAZZ**—Rounder 2065: FRUIT PUNCH; WHOLE TONE BLUES; I WANT TO THANK YOUR FOLKS; A CORN FOR CRIP; YES, YOU MAY; ROCKET NUMBER NINE; DRINK JAX BEER; UP, UP, UP; STILL (THERE'S A MINGUS AMONG US); TALL ORDER.

**Personnel:** Cuts 1-5—The Ed Frank Quintet: Frank, piano; Fred Kemp, tenor saxophone; Wendell Brunionic, trumpet; Erving Charles, bass; Joseph "Smokey" Johnson, drums. Cuts 6-10—Ramsey McLean & The Survivors: McLean, wing bass, acoustic bass, percussion, piano, voice; Charles Neville, soprano, alto saxophone, percussion, voice; Reggie Houston, tenor saxophone, percussion, voice; Steve Masakowski, keytar, guitar, synthesizer; Herlin Riley, drums, percussion, voice; Charmaine Neville, vocals, percussion.

★ ★ ★ ½

**THE NEW NEW ORLEANS MUSIC: NEW MUSIC JAZZ**—Rounder 2066: NOSE BLUES; IN A SENTIMENTAL MOOD; AMAZING GRACE; GEMINI RISING; RADIATION; RIVER NIGER; NEW FOUND LOVE; BLUES FOR A.T.

**Personnel:** Cuts 1-5—The New Orleans Saxophone Ensemble: Tony Dagradi, tenor saxophone; Earl Turbinton Jr., soprano, alto saxophone; Fred Kemp, tenor saxophone; Roger Lewis, baritone saxophone. Cuts 6-8—The Improvisational Arts Quintet: Edward Kidd Jordan, soprano, tenor saxophone; Kent Jordan, piccolo, flute; Clyde Kerr Jr., trumpet; Elton Heron, bass; Darryl Levine (6), piano; Alvin Fielder, drums; Johnathan Bloom (6), percussion.

★ ★ ★ ★

**THE NEW NEW ORLEANS MUSIC: VOCAL JAZZ**—Rounder 2067: SECRET LOVE; AS TIME GOES BY; A FOGGY DAY; PRELUDE TO A KISS; EVERY DAY I HAVE THE BLUES; BODY AND SOUL; TIGHT; I MEAN YOU; JUST ONE OF THOSE THINGS; SKYLARK.

**Personnel:** Cuts 1-5—Germaine Bazzle & Friends: Bazzle, vocals; Alvin "Red" Tyler, tenor saxophone; Emile Vinette, piano; George French, electric bass; James Black, drums. Cuts 6-10—Lady BJ & The Ellis Marsalis Quartet: Lady BJ (Joanne Crayton), vocals; Marsalis, piano; Victor Goines, soprano, tenor saxophone; Reginald Veal, acoustic bass; Noel Kendrick, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

Neglect and misunderstanding are often difficult to overcome. For decades, New Orleans has been popularly recognized as The Birthplace Of Jazz—a blessing for trad and dixieland bands catering to tourists along Bourbon Street, but a curse for musicians trying to work

in post-WWII styles.

Not that such creative sounds didn't abound, they just didn't fit into our outsider's view of the Crescent City. Al Hirt, Pete Fountain, The Preservation Hall Jazz Band—those were the marketable New Orleans musicians sold by the mass media to an unsuspecting, gullible public. The relatively recent recognition given to the Marsalises, Terence Blanchard and Donald Harrison, Wallace Roney, Kent Jordan, and a handful of other bright, talented, young neopop practitioners may have put a somewhat brighter light on our view of musical New Orleans, but there are still many more effective performers ready to emerge out of the darkness.

Rounder Records, so successful in documenting other aspects of the city's cornucopia of music, past and present—Cajun, zydeco, r&b, blues, and soul—now focus on some of these undiscovered jazz artists. This three-LP survey, produced by local writer and Cultural Foundation director Kalamu Ya Salaam, is an admirable, if uneven, sample "of the breadth of contemporary jazz happening in New Orleans circa 1980s."

Unlike the city's other, homegrown folk musics, these jazz tracks don't seem to share any characteristics unique to the area, outside of occasional recurring Caribbean rhythms and a prevalence of clear, crisp, danceable, "up" tempos. Typical in this regard are Ramsey McLean's Survivors; despite their mod-ish eclecticism (including a Sun Ra vamp complete with "Next stop outer space" vocals, a '50s, r&b shuffle, and a modest Mingus tribute), the emphasis is on entertainment, accessibility. Ditto for the Horace Silver-ish intentions of Ed Frank's capable quintet, featuring nicely unfettered tenor from Fred Kemp, the leader's uncluttered, highly melodic bent, an abundance of good taste, and a lack of out-and-out abandon.

Having heard both of volume three's vocalists in concert, I can testify to their individual ability to whip an audience into a frenzy. Bazzle can turn a song inside-out—hear her rhythmic risktaking on "Secret Love"—while Lady BJ is bassier, though, paradoxically, it's her nuanced, dramatic ballad ("Body And Soul") that works best here. Red Tyler's tenor is especially persuasive backing Bazzle, while Ellis Marsalis is his usual distinctive self accompanying Lady BJ.

The "New Music" volume is not necessarily new, but nevertheless not negligible. NOSE (New Orleans Saxophone Ensemble) puts notable, accomplished soloists into cozy arrangements that stick close to their roots—blues, a spiritual with brief "out" episodes, Ellington. The results are polished, but lacking the personality quirks that enliven other such groups: The WSQ, 29th Street, Rova. Kidd Jordan's looser aggregation, meanwhile, plumbs satisfying styles ranging from early '70s McCoy modal African influences ("River Niger") to a '60s lofty tenor-and-drum duet.

It's most gratifying to see the mixture of old vets and young newcomers in each group. But then New Orleans has a history of passing on traditions under such on-the-job, under-fire conditions. That's why music continues to play such a life-affirming role in the Crescent City.

—art lange



## WAYNE HORVITZ/ BUTCH MORRIS/ BOBBY PREVITE

**todos santos**—sound aspects 019: ADAGIO; NIGHTBIRDS; CHEYENNE; THE ROAD TO ZAMORA; YOUR PALM ON THE WINDOW, DRAWING; TODOS SANTOS; WALTZ; OVERS; THE ROAD TO ZAMORA; ASHES TO ASHES.

**Personnel:** Horvitz, acoustic and amplified piano, DX-7; Morris, cornet; Previte, drums, DX-7 drum machine, marimba; Doug Wieselmann, tenor saxophone, clarinet; Bill Frisell, guitar.

★ ★ ★ ★

## THE PRESIDENT

**BRING YR CAMERA**—Elektra/Asylum/None-such 60799: HEARTS ARE BROKEN; PHILIP; OUR HANDS OF WATER; RIDE THE WIDE STREETS; CLEAR THE BRIDGE; ANDRÉ'S MOOD; 3 CROWS; A BAD DREAM; WISH THE CHILDREN WOULD COME ON HOME.

**Personnel:** Wayne Horvitz, keyboards, harmonica, drum programming; Elliot Sharp, guitars; David Tronzo, slide guitar, National steel guitar; Doug Wieselmann, tenor sax; Dave Hofstra, electric bass, tuba; Previte, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The spectrum of Wayne Horvitz's musical palette is obviously pretty vast. His work as a sideman has taken him from hard bop (*The Sonny Clark Memorial Quartet*) to downtown New York jumpcut melanges (John Zorn's Naked City). But always in his own work—as in that of friends and frequent collaborators guitarist Bill Frisell and percussionist Bobby Previte—the emphasis is on the compositional quality underlying any improvisation, the integration of the two into a statement that welds various kinds of pop music echoes with room for improvisation.

Among the cohorts who share that general outlook is Horvitz's wife Robin Holcomb, whose compositions fill *todos santos*. Holcomb's writing tends toward pastels even when, as on "The Road To Zamora," it's knee-deep in dissonance—her softer, more evanescent, more evocative inflections arc gracefully into understatement. Her impressionistic ideas lay musical dot by dot with a thick impasto, and, thanks to the deftly ambitious (and occasionally augmented) trio here, are allowed to unfold and ramify into thoughtful textures that glimmer with subtle shifting. A muted stab from Morris, a sudden piano hammering or jab of white noise from Horvitz, the shimmering of a cymbal

splash from Preville poking and probing this introspective music, make clear that it's more than just moody aural wallpaper. There's a tensile compositional strength shaping it all. And yet, an album full of those moods begins to feel—at least to me—like too much.

*Bring Yr Camera* is the perfect antidote. The President has evolved into a truly funky instrumental rock & roll band; Horvitz himself describes it as a blues band with some twists. However you label it, it's brash and bold, with hard-edged, deep-hued primary colors slashing jagged lines across temporal and generic boundaries. Horvitz layers textures and rotates them into the foreground rather than approving excursions into the fusioneer Land Of the Elongated Noodle; it's an art that depends on juxtaposition and top-notch players for its power. It's also about as far from the fuzak of GRP and Zebra as you can run. The combination of compositional range and personnel insures spewed outbursts of fireworks: no band with the kind of coiled firepower The President boasts just sits on its hands, and the range of Horvitz's writing allows the internal curlicues of each player's characteristic style—from Sharp's noisemongering to Tronzo's highwire bottleneck—to emerge and be woven into the tapestry.

Witty and well-wrought, *Bring Yr Camera* illustrates the potentially broad appeal of whatever you want to label the loose aggregate of player/composers that gets dubbed, for lack of a better tag, the downtown New York scene, from Horvitz to Zorn to Frisell to Preville to Morris, from Tim Berne to Hank Roberts to Joey Baron to Elliot Sharp to Dave Soldier to Marty Ehrlich to countless others. The highly idiosyncratic, tumbled-together sounds each of them makes could be seen as a new wave. Judging by the hooky blend of musical ideas and sheer backbeat accessibility offered by *Bring Yr Camera* and Frisell's *Before We Were Born*, Zorn may be only the first of these penetrating sonic explorers to break out of New York. For Wayne Horvitz and the others, the time will come, and soon—if not today.

—*gene santoro*



## BOB DYLAN AND THE GRATEFUL DEAD

**DYLAN AND THE DEAD**—Columbia 45056: *SLOW TRAIN COMING; I WANT YOU; GOTTA SERVE SOMEBODY; QUEEN JANE APPROXIMATELY; JOEY; ALL ALONG THE WATCHTOWER; KNOCKIN' ON HEAVEN'S DOOR.*

**Personnel:** Bob Dylan, vocals, acoustic guitar; Jerry Garcia, electric guitar, backing vocals; Mickey Hart, drums; Bill Kreutzmann, drums; Phil Lesh, bass; Brent Mydland, keyboards, backing vocals; Bob Weir, electric guitar, backing vocals.

★ ★ ★

Fifteen years ago on an afternoon dedicated to listening to favorite records I turned to my friend Joe and said, "Hey, wouldn't it be great if Dylan and the Dead got together and played?" Joe, although having some trouble imagining such a pairing, agreed but added that he thought the chances of it ever happening were remarkably slim. They seemed to represent almost opposite factions: East versus West, mind versus body. "It might be awkward," he said. Well, 15 years down the road it turns out we were both right. Although this union of some of rock's founding fathers would have been more compelling then, it's still an intriguing alliance now.

On the album's first track, "Slow Train Coming," the Dead are merely along for the ride. If past interview material with Jerry Garcia is any indication, they back up Dylan on his Christian material ("Gotta Serve Somebody," as well), not out of theological kinship, but rather a politeness borne of desire to play with the legendary songwriter. This rendition has a rocking energy and finds the groove, but is hampered by Dylan's mumbling of the pointed lyrics. It is noticeable that Dylan's vocals, once an informed, ironic sneer, have grown more strident and occasionally indecipherable over the years.

On "I Want You," Dylan muffs a lyric here and there but the joyously yearning feel of the song remains intact due to his spirited singing and the Dead's elfin accompaniment. "Gotta Serve Somebody" suggests that the Dead were serving Dylan on this gig; it is reported that Dylan reserved complete artistic control over the project and personally selected all the material. Since I see the Dead as sharing an equal berth in rock history, I'm uncomfortable with this. It might have been exciting for Dylan to show some reciprocity and sing on some of the Dead's fine material; perhaps take verses in "Morning Dew" or "Touch Of Grey" on a more expansive two-album set. No such luck.

"Queen Jane Approximately" is an arbitrary oldies choice. It's okay, but a lot less inspiring than hearing "The Times They Are A-Changin'" or "Baby Blue," which were played on the tour. On one record with only seven selections, song choices are crucial. No Dylan fan or Deadhead stayed up nights chanting for them to do "Joey." Personally, I'm hard pressed to squeeze out tears for Mafioso. In the time it takes for this one to drag to a close, we could have heard both "Tangled Up In Blue" and "I'll Be Your Baby Tonight" (featuring Garcia's return to pedal steel). This album loses a rating star or two due to what *isn't* on it.

However, then there's "All Along The Watchtower." Dylan gives a prayer-like recitation of his dramatic classic until he works up a head of steam and cuts loose in the final verse. The Dead were ready for this one, having begun playing it several months prior in their own shows. Garcia, the good, gray poet of the guitar, finally gets a chance to show his chops and the Dead really shine; notably Phil Lesh

on bass and Mickey Hart and Billy Kreutzmann on drums. Bob Weir's expert rhythm guitar, which is sometimes lost on other recordings, is perfectly audible in the mix. This is the album's high point and truly fulfills the promise of the phrase "Dylan and the Dead."

"Knockin' On Heaven's Door" is Dylan's traditional concert closer, and is made more touching by Garcia's then-recent brush with death. This and "Watchtower" are perhaps the songs that represent Dylan and the Dead in their most comfortable common ground. It's a moody finale to an album that, although certainly not as great as the concerts it purports to represent, certainly makes me glad that they made my 15-year-old daydream come true.

—*bob winters*



## TOM HARRELL

**STORIES**—Contemporary 14043: *RAPTURE; SONG FLOWER; THE MOUNTAIN; THE WATER'S EDGE; STORY; VIABLE BLUES.*

**Personnel:** Harrell, flugelhorn; Bob Berg, tenor saxophone; Niels Lan Doky, piano; John Scofield, guitar (cuts 4-6); Ray Drummond, bass; Billy Hart, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

## BRAD GOODE

**SHOCK OF THE NEW**—Delmark 440: *CLOCK RADIO; TRIBUTE TO CLIFFORD AND SONNY; STEW'S BLUES; OLD FOLKS; WINTER'S SONG; THE NEW BLUES; YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT LOVE IS.*

**Personnel:** Goode, trumpet, keyboard (cut 1); Lin Halliday, tenor saxophone (2-4,6); Jodie Christian, piano (2-7); Dennis Carroll, bass (2-4,6); Jeff Stitely, drums (2,4,6); Bob Rummage, drums (3); Ed Petersen, tenor saxophone (1); Fareed Haque, acoustic and electric guitars (1,5,7); Rob Amster, acoustic/electric bass (5,7); Angus Thomas, electric bass (1); Paul Wertico, drums (1), keyboards (1); Barry Winograd, radio announcer (1); Jo Belle Yoney, voice (1).

★ ★ ★ ½

Two trumpeters, one whose primary language is bebop and the other a self-fancied polyglot, enjoy feature billing on recent albums. Tom Harrell's *Stories*, which has the Phil Woods Quintet/Little Big Band member on the more sonorous flugelhorn, affirms the 42-year-old New Yorker's international reputation as one of the premier brass improvisers while Brad Goode's *Shock Of The New* indicates the little-known Chicagoan, in his mid-20s, is a modest

CONTINUED ON PAGE 39

calls. Or one of his vibraslap toys for Tony Bevan's tenor. These guys tear apart the song form that we're used to hearing, and throw time out the window, but not momentum. Some songs sound like domestic arguments. Others sound like industrial accidents. Others might remind you of odd body noises. Nothing is played in a conventional way. The drummer hits the sides of his drums as much as the skins. The tenor man goes for those not-quite-true notes, squawking on "First Side Story" along with what sounds like random AM radio picks. The tenor plays something he once heard on *Creature Features*, the drummer blasts his woodblocks and cowbells, and there's a noise like the guitar amp fell off a chair. Kingston strums and plucks his guitar, sometimes with chords, sometimes just sounds. Sometimes he scrapes the strings, like on the frantic ending of "Original Gravity." Two-thirds of the way through this good, adventurous record you may have a relapse and find yourself longing for some Lee Ritenour, but it will pass. (reviewed on CD)

The *O'Mara-Darling-Elgart* trio swings, breaks, bends, lurches, and has a blast, much in the same way the Scofield-Swallow-Nussbaum group of several years back did. They're fun to listen to because of the unusual ways they put their musicality to work. The guitar work of **Peter O'Mara** leads the band, but the acoustic bass and drums lend considerable harmonic support as well. O'Mara acts like a poker by a fire, occasionally stoking the

blaze, stirring things up. There's bop, Metheny-ish vapor grooves, and experimental playing on this West German import. And it works.

**Martin Taylor**, the versatile guitarist who worked many years with Stephane Grappelli, really mixes it up on *Sarabanda* without sounding mixed-up himself. Al Jarreau's "Mornin'" is treated with a heavy string backdrop that takes some of the edge off, but Taylor's guitar is quite lyrical and commanding, with a round tone that never wears thin. His duet with John Patitucci on "They Can't Take That Away From Me" is a technical marvel that sings with playfulness. Saxophonist Pete Christlieb duels with the guitarist on the ballad "Jenna" and several other jazz standards that Taylor does proud. It was recorded live with no overdubbing, and is Taylor's most complete set to date. Taylor has organized a fine session here, with percussionist Paulinho Da Costa adding some dancing, daring colors.

Canadian guitarist **Peter Leitch** offers a hard-swinging quartet on his second U.S. release, *Red Zone* (reissued on CD). On the out-vamp of Wayne Shorter's "Speak No Evil," he zings off an outrageous riff that must have cracked his band up. Mixing originals like the blue-framed "Urban Fantasy" and the speeding bullet "Red Zone" with Monk, Strayhorn, and Bird, Leitch achieves a balance of energetic, thoughtful and humorous jazz. "Lush Life" is a solo gem, and there's a fine acoustic rendition of Shorter's "Rio." On electric or acoustic, Leitch gets a warm tone with a hint of mischief

underneath. "Smitty" Smith on drums, pianist Kirk Lightsey, and bassist Ray Drummond complete the dignified rhythm section, which allows Leitch to shine in all of his colors.

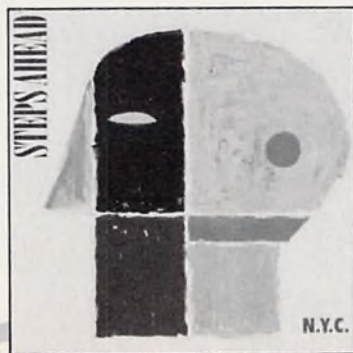
Guitarist **Gray Sargent** makes a strong showing on the new Dave McKenna Quartet record *No More Ouzo For Puzo*, plucking the lead confidently on "Look For The Silver Lining" before trading some playful fours with the pianist/leader. Coloring the music whether he's soloing or just comping behind McKenna, Sargent has great harmonic empathy in this quartet setting. He's crisp but nasty on "Shake Down The Stars," and even bluesier on "Smile." Throughout the record he varies his attack and sustain on the strings to create a more aggressive feeling, something more relaxed, or a twist from who-knows-where to spice up the end of a phrase. He's interesting throughout. This band is worth checking out on this LP or at the Copley Plaza Bar in Boston.

**Sonny Greenwich** and his jazz quartet have the sound of a band that's been together a long time. They leave room for each other to play, pause on certain breaths together, rise and fall as one instrumentalist. Canadian guitarist Greenwich uses a slightly distorted tone, and combines technical ability with nice, economical ideas. Pianist Fred Henke is also a very coherent soloist on *Live At Sweet Basil*, contributing a nice, second solo voice to this well-rounded and impressive album.

Guest-starring on John Lewis' *The Garden Of Delight*, guitarist **Howard Collins** gets

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some prime showspace. "Billie's Bounce" has an intricate arrangement, but this trio (the bassist is Marc Johnson) rides everything very clean and smooth. In this setting, similar to Nat King Cole's trios in the 1940s, the guitar has a number of roles. He plays timekeeper, lead voice, accompanist, muffling his tones or letting them ring like bells. Collins can sound like Lewis, blend into his sound, act like an extension of the pianist, or as a blue alter-ego. (reviewed on CD)

Guitarist **Tim Brady** brings trumpeter Kenny Wheeler along for his *Visions* album, and at times during their duets it's very difficult to tell who is who. Long sustained notes during "Rainforest" sound like the cry of some extra-terrestrial being. On "Leaps," Brady's use of volume control as an envelope provides a fascinating foil for Wheeler's skating horn lines. Wheeler too is capable of blowing accompaniment, sloshing some low chords on "Reasons Unknown" while Brady plays some two-note leads. Brady's final four selections are solos. He makes good use of some post-Frippertronics electronics, and his solo electric guitar can be breathtaking, as on "Running." (reviewed on CD)

**Mick Goodrick** has a way of making the instrument sing, and on *The Ray* he's lifting the guitar up in song. His chord voicings are always something special, and on this 1984 set, just released, he's in top form, setting a lucious bedrock for Jerry Bergonzi's tenor, and bombing it out a bit when solo time comes around.

Con Brio sounds like a band of good friends. Goodrick slides from one musical frame to the next on the speedy Latin "Doin' The Tron" without the slightest hesitation; he's always takin' it somewhere. His descending chord patterns on "You said it, not me" are blue and so beautiful. And Mick is also one of the nimblest. Recent work with Jack DeJohnette has brought him to the public eye once again, and hopefully this record will release the Goodrick secret for good.

From England comes bassist Jim Richardson's group Pogo, playing an appealing menu of Monk, Coltrane, Byard, Rollins, Santamaria, Waldron, and originals on *Don't Get Emotional*. Guitarist **Jeff Green** shines on Richardson's "Blue Water Beach" and dances his way through Monk's "I Mean You" without hinting at the difficulty of the changes. Green also does the nice thing of not feeling the need to overload the proceedings with chords, occasionally letting the sax and bass be the harmonic focus. His subtly brilliant blues-rock work on Richardson's "Sitting Bull" sets a high standard for the later soloists in the song. Tenor man Bob Sydor is a classy player, fun to listen to, kicking it into high gear on "Afro Blue," and getting drummer Simon Morton excited, too. I hope we'll be hearing more of this group Stateside.

**Ross Traut** and Steve Rodby first performed as a duo in 1976, and their new release *The Great Lawn* is all about familiarity and respect, for each other and the music they're attempting. And yet it also has an informal

feeling, as if they're sitting at a friend's house playing for fun. It's a truly musical venture. There's very little chop-flaunting—just creative and warm uses of harmonic space. Traut's control is most impressive. His guitar appears on the scene like a beam of light. Other times it's a bending tone, or a soft moan, like on "Round Midnight." The solo isn't the star here, but there is some nice chordal solo work on *The Great Lawn*. The melodies are the chief concern, and are handled with care. Rodby plays the acoustic bass orchestrally, never forgetting the advance of time. There's very little overdubbing here. The beauty is in the simplicity. The duo's own "The Song Next Door" and "Backtalk" feature great movement, lots of scampering around the axes. (reviewed on CD)

It must be every guitar player's dream to sit in a place like the Ostre Gasvaerk Theatre in Copenhagen and play the music you love, as **Fredrik Sægaard** does on *Solo Guitar Improvisation*. There are dark moments in Sægaard's music, hollow-sounding progressions spiralling downward. Other passages are wispy and up. But focus is lacking. In some instances the reverb effects are too much, obscuring what he's playing without providing a meaningful auditory alternative. On the playful "Anatomy Of A Dream," the lines seem to bounce off each other. Sægaard has a technique of plucking single-note passages, while half-strumming accompaniment. Quiet, but not always easy listening. He's at his best on the most pointed, intrusive tracks. (reviewed on

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*Bluesmaster* is a good name for the new release by **Guitar Roberts**, aka Loren Mazzacone. He brings it from way down deep in the gut. Through de-tuning and radical stretching techniques, Guitar Roberts can sound like a bottleneck, pedal steel, or a Strat through an old tube amp. Suzanne Langille's vocals keep it on the blue side, her often understated phrases, barely on mic, blending well with Roberts' lead lines. When she sings "The thrill is gone," it's easy to believe. The traditional blues fan should check this one out. Sounds like the real thing.

Rock studio legend **Steve Hunter** has a new solo record that should be checked out. Hunter may not challenge Joe Satriani in hammer-ons-per-second, but the man who has played with Peter Gabriel, Alice Cooper, and hundreds of others lays an impressive stamp of artistry here with his compositions, impeccable phrasing, and vast, impressive soundscapes. There's power and beauty on *The*

*Deacon*. The power chord is re-invented several times over the course of the record. The guitar never rests. Like Hendrix, he's never satisfied where he is, so he's moving on to better the sound, or deciding to forget it and move completely on. The communication between his heart and his fingers is very fast. What he plays seems torn straight out of his gut. Hunter also plays all synths, and gets help from bassist Jim Johnson and drummers Jack White and Bruce Gary. This is an album we wish Jeff Beck would make, the album Daryl Stuermer wishes he'd made. One of the best rock records of the year.

*Spirit Of Light* is the first release by the group Axiom, and features the strong guitar work of **Peter Templer** throughout. He propels tunes with choppy funky riffs, blows into overdrive for blues-rock assaults, and leads odd-time melody lines around vocalist Arnold McCuller on "All Around You." If they can be forgiven for the sappy love songs with cliché female vocals, there are some items to rec-



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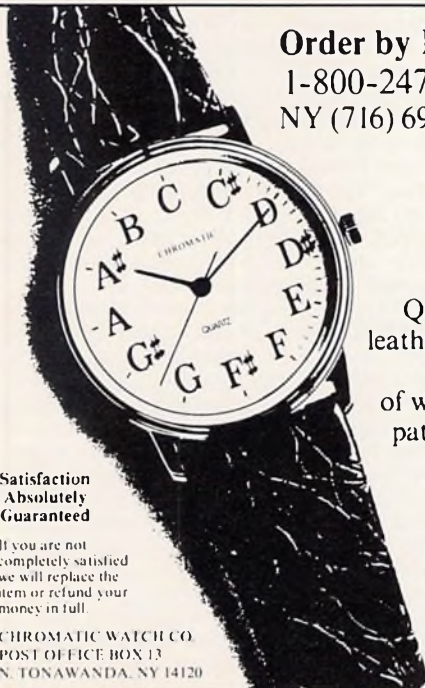


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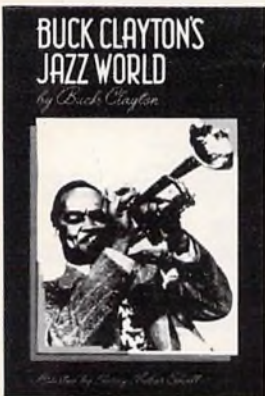
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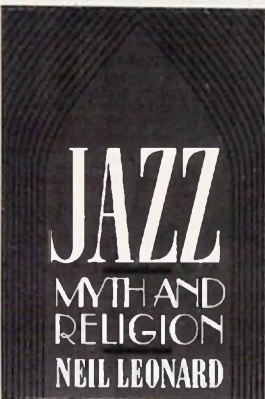
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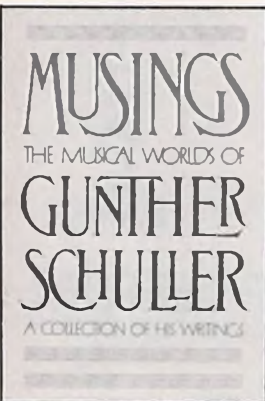
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ommand. Saxman Bryan McCann and bassist Morrow Fleet are solid throughout, and drummer Phil Templer makes a lot of different grooves work. They may try a few too many of the "required" fusion grooves, because very little band identity really comes through. There's nothing earthshaking here, but the musicianship is good. As go the vocal numbers, though, Axiom is not yet Steely Dan. (reviewed on CD)

**Glenn Alexander** features the leader/guitarist in various electronic jazz/rock settings, with guest artists like Randy Brecker and Mino Cinelu. But the most impressive thing about Alexander's album isn't who he got to play on it, or his solid backup band—it's the quality of the songwriting. Some is Return To Forever-influenced, some very Holdsworth, but the tunes build nicely, often enhanced by some interesting musical curves. And they don't max out on every tune. There's some poise shown. Alexander is in control in the fluid stream-of-note passages, the synth power-chord progressions, or round-tone jazz settings, such as on "Those Closest." (reviewed on CD)

**Birell Lagrene's** *Foreign Affairs* is some great fusion. Lagrene knocks himself out on guitars and basses. Thrown in the pot are bits of Weather Report, Mahavishnu on occasion; and it's done quite well, with big help from drummer Dennis Chambers, percussionist Cafe, keyboardist Koono, and bassists Jurgen Altig and Jeff Andrews. This guy is up there with Mike Stern in terms of range and force in solos. And he also does it on acoustic. He's quick on the draw, and though this record could stand a bit more urgent feel at times, it should endear him to guitar and fusion fans.

G. Calvin Weston's *Dance Romance* fuses Sly and the Family Stone with Ornette Coleman. If you hadn't already guessed, **Blood Ulmer** is along here, lending his harmolodic country jazz guitar licks. On "Are You Ready To Dance," he plays a solo over a consistent rhythmic groove for a change, and nails it. Side One is the dance side. On Side Two, the "serious" side, Weston's drumming gets wild, although he's developed the strength and power to make it firm and just as rooted. On "Preview," Ulmer and bassist Jamaaladeen Tacuma duel lead lines as Weston goes full-throttle. This chariot really moves. The ride might be bumpy and they might lose a hubcap along the way, but if you like free-spirited music, G. Calvin and Blood deliver here. The closing blues statement shows Weston at his most fill-acious one minute, equally restrained the next.

If you like your guitar Down And Dirty, check out **Eric Gale's** *Let's Stay Together*. It's not as slick as Stuif was—more Pops Staples, earthy and heavenly at the same time. James Taylor's "Close Your Eyes" is covered in extra-tasteful fashion, alas you wouldn't expect Gale to over-play. He puts some power into his bluesy version of "Grapevine." Stix Hooper, no longer The Crusaders' drummer, brings his fine funky jazz playing to Gale's project. While this one exposes Gale in some bare, bluesy settings, several other cuts have an over-produced feeling that detracts—on the final cut it's hard to even find the guitarist. A promising start on this one, but it loses focus. (reviewed on CD)

Eric Gale's other recent release is *In A Jazz Tradition*, produced by Ron Carter. And with

help from Grady Tate, Lonnie Smith, Houston Person, it's what the name implies—a grooving, swinging, neck-snapping record. Person grows, and Smith's Hammond organ takes it to a mellow mood. This is some fine blues and jazz; and after hearing Gale in various r&b settings over the years, this is expansive territory for him to create in. Gale doesn't use much in the way of special effects, but he can get different voices by tugging a string a certain way, dampening strings during a percussive run, bending and sustaining. This one is consistently excellent. (reviewed on CD)

**Henry Kaiser** can now add pop/social historian to his other titles—avant garde guitarist, producer, and underwater diving instructor. On the extraordinary *Those Who Know History*, he takes aim at such institutions as "Liberty Valance," "Ode To Billy Joe," and "The Andy Griffith Show Theme." He pays tribute to The Grateful Dead, and has his Crazy Backwards Alphabet mates along to jam on some Captian Beefheart. This is a stinging musical assault, with Kaiser and fellow guitarists Bruce Anderson and Glenn Phillips commanding in the blues-rock jagged harmolodic work and heady ensemble playing. Tongues firmly in cheek. (reviewed on CD)

**Kevin Eubanks** is putting all his best feet forward on *The Searcher*, highlighting the acoustic and electric, the jazz and the pop angles with which he's had success, and getting into some interesting new situations with his octave guitar. Eubanks seems more confident than ever on strong tracks like "Cookin'" and "Straitjacket." He uses vocals as a musical color throughout the record, and a nice blend of acoustic sounds (guitars, piano, basses) with electric ones. The sound never gets old, nor the grooves stale, thanks to drummers Gene Jackson and Dennis Chambers, and bassists Kenny Davis and Victor Bailey. Eubanks has found a sound and style that is challenging to listen to, but not too far out there for the general public to enjoy. (reviewed on CD) **db**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 32  
jazz talent worth monitoring.

Harrell's playing on the six originals of *Stories* is distinguished by a striking vocal quality, to wit a smoothly swinging lyricism capable of heating up into an alluring fire. His attributes are many, including a bountiful imagination, an ardor for tone, an economy of line, well nigh perfect execution of phrases, and keen understanding of the subtleties of syncopation. The sole ballad "Song Flower" finds his flugelhorn carrying heartbreaking beauty; the melody's colors, textures, and form are seemingly scrutinized from within, supporting jacket annotator Ken Franckling's assertion that Harrell's severe mental disorder, schizophrenia, dictates he rivet *all* his attention to the making of music whenever he brings horn to lips.

"Song Flower" and the other songs prove Harrell hasn't any trouble connecting cerebration to feelings. There's a decorously joyous luster to his solo and unison lines on "The Mountain" and "The Water's Edge," compositions as gracious and genial in spirit as a gem from the songbook of former employer Horace Silver. To these ears, Harrell's fleet work on "Rapture" evokes *joie de vivre*, suggestive of his honorable forefather Clifford Brown. A most



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captivating ambivalence informs his playing on the justifiably lengthy numbers "Story" (13:34 minutes) and "Viable Blues" (9:25), where soloists Bob Berg and John Scofield make large impressions. The saxist's cantankerousness on "Rapture" and the guitarist's lovely contributions to "The Water's Edge" need to be noted. The support team of Niels Lan Doky, Ray Drummond, and especially Billy Hart furnish the tunes with captivating spirit or distinctive delicacy, each also making the most of solo spots.

Goode and his regular associates—Lin Halliday, Jodie Christian, Dennis Carroll, and Jeff Stitely—acquit themselves fairly well on *Shock Of The New's* four straight-ahead jazz selections. The trumpeter's burgeoning creativity is satisfyingly evidenced on occasion although his ideas often strut and the themes he frames for himself are less than provocative. He has dexterous technique and an acceptable, if unripe, sound. Halliday, the journeyman who shares the front line, takes solid tenor sax solos as the other musicians stay busy delivering the harmonic and/or rhythmic goods with aplomb.

Feeling encumbered by the bebop ethos, Goode is true to his eclectic self by bringing fusion and mood music to the album's program. The title track zooms along as a witty, funk-ed-up trifle complete with ghastrly alarm clock, mock disc jockey eye-openers, dizzy sax from Ed Petersen, and Fareed Haque's hell-raising guitar. Goode plus 14 string players and extras have an affected and soporific time of it on "Winter's Song" and "You Don't Know What Love Is," their bathos on a par with that which permeates those trumpet-cum-strings, speak-to-me-of-love records a senile grandfather rightfully uses as ashtrays.

—frank-john hadley

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## cd reviews

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



### PETER ERSKINE

**MOTION POET** — Denon CY-72582: *ERSKOMAN; NOT A WORD; HERO WITH A THOUSAND FACES; DREAM CLOCK; EXIT UP RIGHT; A NEW REGALIA; BOULEZ; THE MYSTERY MAN; IN WALKED MAYA.* (53:11 minutes)

**Personnel:** Erskine, drums; Will Lee, bass (cuts 1, 5, 6); Marc Johnson, bass (2-4, 8, 9); Jeff Mironov, guitar (1, 5, 6); John Abercrombie, guitar and guitar synth (2-4, 8, 9); Jim Beard, keyboards (1-8); Randy Brecker, flugelhorn (2, 4, 8); Michael Brecker, tenor sax (3); Eliane Elias, piano (2, 5); Vince Mendoza, synth sequencing (6, 7); Bob Mintzer, tenor sax (1, 3, 4-6, 8); Lew Soloff, trumpet (1-4, 6); Dave Bergeron, trombone, tuba (1-6); Joe Mosello, trumpet (1-6); Lawrence Feldman, alto, tenor

sax (1, 3-6); Roger Rosenberg, baritone sax (1, 3, 4, 6); Peter Gordon, french horn (2-4); Jerry Peel, french horn (2-4); John Clark, french horn (2-4); Matt Finders, bass trombone (2-4, 6).

★★★★ 1/2

More and more drummers are beginning to think of themselves as composers first, drummers second. Bobby Previte, Danny Gottlieb, and Peter Erskine, all world-class skin-bashers, are three such drummers who are emerging as strong composers in their own right. Freed from their sideman duties, they concentrate on tunes and arrangements and the overall production rather than trying to showcase flashy chops and feature longwinded solos.

On this, his third as a leader, Erskine puts heavy emphasis on horn arrangements while subtly underscoring the tunes with typical finesse on the drums. Like his previous Denon release, *Transition*, he seems to be after moods and textures, conveyed by a large ensemble sound. As he states, "My aim and desire with this album was to say as much as I could in as few words as possible from the drums. The image that comes to mind is similar to that of a Zen brush painting where the poetry is achieved through the motion of the brush and the economy of the motion."

And hence, the title. The project opens with his original, "Erskomani," a jaunty, swaggering calypso-flavored number that recalls his "Corazon" from *Transition*. On another original, "Not A Word," he takes the opening riff from "I Remember April" and turns it into a lush hymn with warm-sounding horn arrangements for three french horns, two flugelhorns, bass trombone, and tuba.

Vince Mendoza's "Hero With A Thousand Faces" is a reunion of The John Abercrombie Quartet, with Erskine and bassist Marc Johnson weaving a groove around a 10-piece horn section and soloists Michael Brecker and John Abercrombie blowing over the top.

Erskine pulls off an inspired arrangement of Joe Zawinul's "Dream Clock" from one of their past Weather Report endeavors, using the 10-piece horn section in much the same way that Jaco Pastorius did on his big band reworking of "Three Views Of A Secret." Again, Erskine

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lurks in the background, tapping lightly on a cymbal, adding brushstrokes like a Zen master.

Mendoza's "A New Regalia" is his answer to Frank Zappa's classic "Peaches En Regalia" while his "Boulez" is a tribute to Zappa's main man, Pierre Boulez. On these two pieces, Erskine dips back into the drummer mode, flashing his mighty prowess around the horn lines on "Regalia" and playing with space and time on the free-floating "Boulez" . . . the perfect blend of power, finesse, and creativity.

More solid-groove playing with Will Lee on the bouyant funk of "Exit Up Right," and on the CD's most sublime cut—a haunting trio piece with Abercrombie and Johnson, named after his daughter—"In Walked Maya," Peter pulls out the brushes and plays Zen master once again, setting up an alluring mood with his gentle touch.

No grandstanding anywhere on this album. Just lots of good music. —bill milkowski



## THE ASTRONAUTS

**SURF PARTY**—RCA 8557-2-R: BAJA; SURFIN' U.S.A.; COMPETITION COUPE; MOVIN'; HEY, SURGARFOOT; AROUND AND AROUND; SURF PARTY; TWIST AND SHOUT; KUK; BANZAI PIPELINE; LET'S GO TRIP-PIN'; OUR CAR CLUB; RAZZAMATAZ; EVERY ONE BUT ME; EL AGUILA (THE EAGLE); SUSIE-Q; YOU GOTTA LET ME GO; HOT DOGGIN'; 4:56 STRINGRAY; MAIN TITLE FROM RIDE THE WILD SURF. (44:56 minutes)

**Personnel:** Rich Fifeild, lead guitar, vocals; Bob Demmon, rhythm guitar, vocals; Dennis Lindsey, rhythm guitar, vocals; Stormy Patterson, bass guitar, vocals; Jim Gallagher, drums, vocals.

★ ★ ★

It was 1963—the year they hit the big-time with Lee Hazelwood's "Baja." That tune was the lead-off from their first RCA LP, *Surfin' With The Astronauts*. "Surfin' with the Astronauts"? Don't laugh. In this writer's humble opinion, at times they put their relatively water-logged rivals—the Surfaris, Dick Dale and his Deltones, The Ventures, The Trashmen, even those Kings Of The Western Swamp. The Beach Boys—to shame. Unfortunately, for America and the rest of the world, "Baja" was to be this Colorado quintet's only national hit.

What followed were a series of LPs—one devoted to cars, two concert records, and a few more studio LPs that emphasized production as well as tighter arrangements and vocals. It was, however, the two live recordings—*Everything Is A-OK!* and *Astronauts Orbit Kampus*

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("A-O-K," get it?)—that best captured the spirit and talent of this interstellar garage band. Initially having a repertoire that included a fair amount of instrumentals, their live sets included very credible covers of such r&b staples as "Bo Diddley," "Big Boss Man," and "Stormy Monday Blues."

*Surf Party* is a compilation of primarily beach and car tunes done over a two-year period. Sad to say, none of the live stuff is here. Instead, I have images of fraternity parties with sawdust thrown on the floor to simulate you-know-what to go with drunken reveries to "Twist And Shout" and "Surfin' USA."

The strongest music on this disc comes from The Astronauts' first album mentioned above. This Fender-laden collection of college-aged WASPS epitomized the quintessential "surfer sound" on tunes like "Baja," their autobiographical "Kuk," and Henry Mancini's (that's right) "Banzai Pipeline." Rich Fifield, an F. Danforth Quayle look-alike, was an average singer; but his lead guitar playing was strong (albeit limited) from the start, complete with the standard tremolo and reverb devices. And Stormy Patterson's electric bass guitar provided clear, finger-picking counterpoint to the other three six-stringers. His almost Scott LaFaro-ish style of playing was complemented beautifully by the intricacies of Jim Gallagher's textbook snare attacks and well-placed tom tom accents. Even on simple tunes like "Movin'" and "Suzie-Q," there exists a delightful complexity to an essentially guitar-bass-drums sound,

vaguely reminiscent of jazz. The digital sound helps to demonstrate this.

There are a couple of flat movie tunes included that have obvious thematic relevance as well as some I can't trace to any one source, e.g., "Razzamataz," and Chuck Berry's "Around And Around." A number of them are mono versions for some reason. Beyond having some historical value, they're of no real musical consequence.

Once having enjoyed the rich vocal harmonies of The Beach Boys and the instrumental flair of The Ventures, hearing The Astronauts was another treat altogether. Years before the tandems of Garcia/Lesh/Kreutzmann/Hart, Kaukonen/Casady/Dryden, and Bruce/Clapton/Baker, there was Fifield/Patterson/Gallagher: a bunch of "killer unknowns" who probably ended up staying in school and became lawyers, doctors, or insurance salesmen. (I didn't say they graduated.)

Their legacy exists in a mystical sense—in numerous garage and punk bands enamored with the sounds of electric guitars, more explosive drumming, and an evergrowing professional and musical tightness. Sure, they have the likes of Chuck Berry, Bo Diddley, and even Brian Wilson to thank; but theirs was a sound all its own . . . direct from that endless sand dune in the sky.

After all is said and done, one question remains: Is the balance of their best material in RCA's vaults, or is it lost in space?

—john ephland

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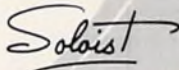
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# blindfold test

**1 MATERIAL.** "Silent Land" (from *MEMORY SERVES, Elektra/Musician*) **Bill Laswell, electric bass; Michael Beinhorn, effects; Charles K. Noyes, percussion; George Lewis, trombone.**

Sounds like Percy Jones. I like the harmonics. It's one of the few times I've heard harmonics that doesn't just sound like Jaco. I know Percy Jones does a lot of that, those sliding harmonics. Could be Jonas Hellborg . . . but it was grooving, so I don't know who it is. Bill Laswell? Hmm . . . that was interesting. That's the first time I heard something with Laswell sticking out on the bass. Good job, Bill. Three stars.

**2 DAVID MOSS.** "The Man With The Rain-Colored Legs" (from *FULL HOUSE, Moers Music*) **Jamaaladeen Tacuma, basses; Moss, vocals, drum machine.**

This is a record? I don't know who that is but whoever it is, I'm sorry . . . that shit is not happening. That sounds exactly like what I sounded like when I was 16.

BM: It's Jamaaladeen.

VB: It's Jamaaladeen? Hey, my homeboy from Philly. I guess Jamaal's got his thing. A lot of people dig him. I don't hear what it is, though. He's gonna kick my ass next time he sees me, but it's cool, Jamaal. I know you hate the way I play too, so it's alright, man. I dunno . . . not enough music in there for me. One star.

**3 JONAS HELLBORG.** "It's The Pits" (from *THE BASIC THING, Amigo*) **Hellborg, solo electric bass.**

Jonas Hellborg? I had heard about him doing this kind of stuff but I never really heard it before. That was cool. I like the harmonics part in the beginning especially. The thumb part was fast. I don't know how funky it was, but technically that was pretty impressive . . . playing triplets and all of that.

Some interesting stuff on there. Four stars for the technique, one for the feeling. But depending on what league you're playing in, that could make you either a champion or a loser.

**4 JOHN PATITUCCI.** "Wind Sprint" (from *JOHN PATITUCCI, GRP*) **Patitucci, Lag bass, six-string bass; Dave Weckl, drums; Michael Brecker, tenor sax;**

## VICTOR BAILEY

by Bill Milkowski

**A** Philadelphia native, Victor Bailey first came to prominence as the electric bassist who replaced Jaco Pastorius in Weather Report back in 1982.

He maintained a healthy relationship with mentors Joe Zawinul and Wayne Shorter, touring heavily with the two fusion pioneers and appearing on four albums—*Procession*, *Domino Theory*, *Sportin' Life*, and *This Is This*. He continued to play with Zawinul during the Weather Update phase and also put in time with Michal Urbaniak, Steps Ahead (*Magnetic* on Elektra), and saxophonist Bill Evans.

Bailey's most recent project was *Missing Links*, an album of updated Motown and soul staples that he co-produced and played on. He has been composing and producing pop material for contemporary r&b groups like Force MD and Madame X.

Bailey has recently put together his



first solo album, (*Bottoms Up*). This was his first Blindfold Test.

**Dave Witham, synthesizer; John Beasley, synthesizer.**

Sounds good, nice groove. John Patitucci . . . bad mutherf\*\*ker. Great solo. Yeah, thank you. Now that's music. John, great job. I gotta go get a copy of this album. That's a good tune, the band sounded good and tight, nice solo.

Only thing I'd like to hear more of from John is I always hear him solo in just that one area of the bass. That six-string has such a broad range of expression, but he's always way up high on the neck. Use the whole bass, man. Other than that, great job. Four stars.

**5 STU HAMM.** "Country Music" (from *RADIO FREE ALBEMUTH, Relativity*) **Hamm, electric bass; Mike Barsimanto, drums; Glenn Freundl, keyboards.**

Nice two-handed technique. Real clean. Got to be my old pal from Berklee, Stuart Hamm. Great! Stu . . . he's always been into some different things. This is great. Corny, but from a bass-playing perspective, very creative. Not exactly what I'm into, but to see him do it is great. That gets five

stars.

That was original, that was different. Stuart, you're such a ham.

**6 RANDY BERNSEN.** "Olde Hats" (from *MUSIC FOR PLANETS, PEOPLE & WASHING MACHINES, Zebra*) **Jaco Pastorius, bass; Randy Bernsen, guitar; Peter Erskine, drums; Othello Molineux, steel pans; Robert Thomas, percussion; the University of Miami Jazz Band horn section.**

Somebody likes Jaco a lot. It doesn't sound like him, though.

BM: It's Jaco.

VB: It is? Tone sounds different. What record is this? I thought I had every record that he ever played on in his life. I knew there was no way I could get past this Blindfold Test without having to deal with Jaco. How will I ever escape him? Five stars.

That's what I like. I'm a song person. And that's a song. Jaco sounds great on there, like Jaco. Erskine obviously knew how to fit in around what Jaco was doing . . . Nice tune. Anything Jaco's on, I love. Real creative. Five stars. db



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## BUNKY GREEN

AN INNOVATIVE PERFORMER, CLINICIAN, AND PROFESSOR, BUNKY GREEN SPEAKS OUT FOR JAZZ EDUCATION.

by Joe Cunniff

**A**lto saxophonist Bunky Green, an innovator on the Chicago jazz scene since the '60s, is active more than ever as a performer, a clinician, and a professor of music. He also is President-elect of the National Association of Jazz Educators, the largest association of jazz educators in the world. It is an honor that befits a man who was recently described before the national convention by Frank Foster, leader of The Count Basie Band, as "one of the unsung heroes of our time."

Born Vernice Green, Jr., in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, he chuckles remembering that it was a friend of his mother's who is responsible for his nickname. "I was a baby in the crib, and wearing a little bonnet. My mother's friend said that I reminded her of a comic strip character called 'Bunky,' and that was it—I've been Bunky ever since."

A strongly religious person who weathered the recent loss of both his parents within a six-month period, Green credits his parents with bringing out the best in him. "They bought me a tenor sax when I was a kid and let me go from room to room making noise with that thing. It must have been awful, but all I heard were encouraging words."

"I loved listening to Gene Ammons, Dexter Gordon, and Wardell Gray. When I first heard Charlie Parker, I didn't like him—too many notes, I thought! But my friend Frank Morgan, whom I grew up with, said 'Listen to him again.' We listened to 'Don't Blame Me.' It was so beautiful, I couldn't sleep!"

By age 16, Green could play Bird solos verbatim. He learned harmony from a Milwaukee friend, Billy Wallace, who went on to play piano with Max Roach. When Bunky was still a teen, Wallace invited him to New York to sit in at The Village Vanguard.

"Here I was, a kid, and on that stage were my personal heroes—Sonny Rollins, Kenny Dorham, and Max. My hands were shaking on the keys! But I pulled it off. We played 'Algo Bueno.'"

Green followed Jackie McLean into the Charlie Mingus group, and recalls that "Mingus would always encourage you to play what you felt—not what the audience, or someone else felt, but really what you felt."

First recorded by Cannonball Adderley, Green has now 11 albums to his credit, working with such stars as Paul Serrano, Harold Jones, Cleveland Eaton, Ira Sullivan, Eddie Harris, Clark Terry, Sonny Stitt ("My



STEVE KAGAN

mentor—a dream come true"), James Moody, Randy Brecker, and Elvin Jones, all of whom he speaks very highly of. Regarding that record with Elvin, *Time Capsules* on the Vanguard label, Green says "I'd like to straighten out a mistake that appeared in **down beat**. When they reviewed that record, a conceptually far-reaching solo I played was attributed to George Coleman, and he played tenor!"

Green heard some music in Algiers, Africa which fascinated him. "It was like a small bagpipe, a small violin, and a small drum. I used about 16 bars of this in my introduction to 'Green Dolphin Street,' which became a hit record around the Midwest."

But Green decided that he didn't want to travel. Rather, he wanted to go back to school to learn more about music. One of the first jazz performers to go into education, he was severely criticized. "People said, 'You'll lose your soul.' But by 1972, people were saying to me, 'How do I get a degree?' Today just about everybody is into teaching jazz on some level. Obviously, it *doesn't* hurt your soul. Wherever music comes from—Eastern or Western cultures, it's how *you* phrase it that makes it jazz."

Green, who graduated from Northwestern University, studying classical saxophone with Fred Hemke, is today a full professor at Chicago State University. "I teach Jazz Education, Jazz Arranging, Jazz Band, Jazz Combo, Improvisations I and II, Applied Saxophone, and independent studies, such as keyboard harmony." He also has a book out, *Jazz In A Nutshell* (Aebersold).

Green states that "today's bebop resurgence is due to jazz education. People are going back to listen to Clifford Brown, Bud Powell, Bird, Diz, etc., and that's fantastic because it provides an excellent point of departure. Today's trend, however, is to play outside of the changes. It's not essential, but good to understand the rules before you bend or break them to create your own set of rules. There has to be *continuity*. In classical music, Wagner suspended tonality.

Then Schoenberg said, 'Why have any key at all?' Every note became equal. But Schoenberg understood everything, learned and experimented with all the old rules before he gradually made his own."

Green's influence on younger players, such as Steve Coleman and Greg Osby, pleases him immensely. "Steve Coleman used to stand outside my teaching studio door and record my practicing! Until he heard me, he sounded like Bird. Now he's developed his own approach, and sounds great." And Bethany Pickens, daughter of Chicago pianist Willie Pickens, told N.Y. player Greg Osby that he sounded like Bunky Green. Osby has said, "Where can I find Bunky? I've patterned my style after him." Bunky continues, "Today everyone should hear Greg Osby. He is one of the finest young altoists on the scene."

"I tell students, 'Don't be afraid to change! You can play anything you want, as long as it has shape, form, and meaning. The main thing is your *logic*, and that's almost synonymous with continuity."

A man who reads widely, Green is also interested in Chinese, Japanese, and gamelan music. He recently completed work with renowned composer Ed Bland on a video version of the classic play, *A Raisin In The Sun*, for PBS. "Looking at genuine tragic and love scenes, and improvising the music behind them is wonderful."

Clinics are a great love of Bunky Green's: "I like to demonstrate, to show people." Working from his base in Country Club Hills outside Chicago, he has started clinics in Montreux (Switzerland), Detroit, and in Poland. Current plans have him playing in Orlando and Jacksonville (Florida), Rockford (Illinois), and Philadelphia. "Money's okay," he says, "but the art comes first. I'm into excellence." db

## HENRY KAISER

THIS GUITARIST'S BRAND OF "SHOCK JAZZ" ENCOMPASSES ELEMENTS AS DIVERSE AS TV'S "ANDY GRIFFITH" AND THE GRATEFUL DEAD. THE BOTTOM LINE? FUN.

by Robin Tolleson

**H**enry Kaiser has fun. Maybe a little too much fun. "That's the idea," the guitarist laughs. "That's the aim, getting away with it. Having fun all the time."

It's amazing that somebody who works as hard as Kaiser still does have fun. Henry



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made nine records last year and plays in six groups regularly. He has put together an eclectic blend of pop and outer-stratos rock on *Re-Marrying For Money* and *Those Who Know History Are Doomed To Repeat It* (both on SST). He did two albums with Crazy Backwards Alphabet and two Synclavier records, *Devil In The Drain* (SST) with a version of "The Davey Crockett Theme" that qualifies it for Twisted Childrens' Album Of The Year, a duet record with keyboardist Sergey Kuryokhin, a solo guitar record, and a record with traditional Korean composer and instrumentalist Jin Hi Kim. As if he needs to keep busy, Kaiser also teaches Underwater Scientific Research at the University of California, Berkeley.

Henry even has fun in the face of adversity, like the night his Dr. Know-It-All group opened for the pop-jazz Rippingtons at The Great American Music Hall in San Francisco. Some concertgoers even hissed at Kaiser's opening set. Henry calmly explained that his music is avant garde, and that he usually plays to a different type crowd. "It's just fun to play music, and fun to play with my buddies. And about one-quarter of the people there were enjoying it," Kaiser responded later. The weeks before and after that show were more positive, as he played at a sold-out Fillmore with Richard Thomp-



Kaiser & Co.

son, at The Asian Art Museum with Invite The Spirit, and at Koncepts Kultural Gallery in Berkeley with Jin Hi Kim.

Folks like Fred Frith, Material, Henry Cow, and The Golden Palominos call Henry from New York, Europe, and Japan to add weird and twisted guitar to their projects. Henry comes out of the European free improvisation background of the late '60s and early '70s. "There it was very common

to play with different people all the time and not form fixed groups. I picked that attitude up and applied it to rock," he says. "I picked up a lot of attitudes towards music and improvisation from people like Derek Bailey and Adam Parker. I have a real democratic idea of doing these rock records. It's very much a group effort.

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but nobody's told what to do. Nobody told [drummer] John Hanes he had to play a second-line beat on 'Fishin' Hole' [*Those Who Know History*]. Anybody can change the arrangements at any time. It's within our technical capabilities to deal with that; so why do the same thing every time?"

*Those Who Know History Are Doomed To Repeat It* is sort of a twisted take on the Beau Brummels' '66 album, which featured interpretations of "Mr. Tamborine Man," "Hang On Sloopy," and "These Boots Are Made For Walkin'." For *History*, Kaiser includes versions of "The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance" (Kaiser calls the orchestration "Oum Kalthoum Meets Aaron Copland"), "Ode To Billy Joe" (his twisted arrangement brings out a wickedness not heard in any previous versions), and "The Andy Griffith Show Theme" (sounds like Opie is singin'—a heartwarmer, especially with Twilight Zone guitar by Kaiser and Bruce Anderson). "It's basically fun things that you do when you have a jam session at home with people that play rock music," says Henry. Kaiser had been doing such gigs once a year for several years, and it was such fun that they decided to do a record. "And I'd always wanted to do [The Grateful Dead's] 'Dark Star,'" Kaiser says. "I knew this rhythm section [Bill Frisell's] in New York to do it with, and that worked. That was a very difficult thing to do, but I'm proud of it."

The Dead were a major influence on Kaiser, dating back to their beginnings in San Francisco during 1967's Summer of Love. "I saw the Dead a lot around '67, in my very formative high school musical years, before I played guitar or anything. They taught me a lot of musical values—the importance of improvisation, to be real expressive and committed to what you play, to put a lot of passion into it. To take it seriously, and to have a good time, because they always have a good time. They've always worked together in a very fair, democratic way, where they cared about each other and took care of each other over the years; and that's why they've stayed together so long. And they've always been very eclectic. Those are all extremely positive musical values that I've adopted."

Kaiser's Synclavier work on *Devil In The Drain* is remarkable—makes Zappa's *Jazz From Hell* sound like a kitten. And on his two albums with Crazy Backwards Alphabet in 1988, he chronicles a band which felt as comfortable quoting Albert Ayler as well as ZZ Top's Billy Gibbons. Kaiser laughs about a recent gig in Holland, where a "polite" crowd asked for more material than the just-reunited CBA was prepared to give. "We hadn't played with [CBA's drummer] Maksymenko for six months and hadn't had much time to rehearse. They were clapping for an encore, and we didn't know what to do. I had a weird thought and said, 'Spoonful.' So we did a

satirical Cream/Jimi Hendrix kind of 'Spoonful' for 10 minutes, and it was fun. One thing I always like to do in concerts is play things we've never played before. Try them as a surprise and see what happens." Crazy Backwards Alphabet is a fun band to watch, because as the name implies, you just never know from which angle they're go to come. "The experimentalism and subversiveness of Crazy Backwards Alphabet is much more out on the surface," laughs an obviously proud Kaiser.

Kaiser enjoys doing guitar duo gigs, and has performed in that setting with Sonny Sharrock, Bill Frisell, Davey Williams, Elliot Sharp, Glenn Phillips, and Bruce Anderson. "I'm guitar crazy. I love the guitar, so I've enjoyed that an awful lot," he says. Kaiser isn't crazy about the sounds that the "name" rock or jazz guitarists get, though. He's as interested in probing the harmonic possibilities of the instrument onstage as playing some riff that he's been practicing over and over in his room. Henry'd like his guitar to sound as little as possible like it has in the past.

(His guitar equipment includes a wide variety of Fender-style guitars with mostly Modulus Graphite necks along with an effects rack made up of a T.C. 2290 Delay, an Eventide H3000 Harmonizer, and a

Lexicon PCM 42.)

When he picked up the guitar in college, it was because he wanted to "play the blues, play like Derek Bailey, and play world music." Kaiser is now studying traditional Korean music carefully and has a big collection. He plays in the group Invite The Spirit with Sang Won Park and Charles K. Noyes, doing a mixture of Western improvisation and Korean traditional music. "I've really enjoyed working with improvisors from other cultures, and I'm looking forward to more collaborations with people from other cultures. There's so much that can be done beyond the Ravi Shankar/Yehudi Menuhin kind of simplistic view of that sort of thing," he says.

Kaiser's arrangements are like collages, where he picks licks out of musical history: some Bob Wills, some Beefheart, a swamp-rock lick from John Fogerty, a quote from a 1965 Toru Takamitsu film soundtrack, some Korean court music quotes, a Standells joke, some Steve Cropper and Booker T. jokes, a very obscure Dusty Springfield quote; something different, or amazingly out of context, to make you turn your head. The way Kaiser sees it, turning heads is nothing special. "That's the idea. That's the job. That's what I figure they pay me for, so that's what I do." db



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