

downbeat

For Contemporary Musicians

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JOHN LEE HOOKER
RETURN OF THE
BOOGIE KING

10TH ANNUAL
NEW MUSIC
AMERICA
COVERAGE

KENNY GARRETT
STYLE SEARCH

TAKE 6
SONGS
OF JOY

RANDY BRECKER & ELIANE ELIAS OF MATES AND MUSIC

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Randy Brecker & Eliane Elias



DAVID SCAMONE

John Lee Hooker



MITCHELL SEIDEL

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RANDY BRECKER & ELIANE ELIAS



ALONE TOGETHER

ALDO MAURO

By Michael Bourne

They call each other Sweetie. When pianist Eliane Elias was first smitten with trumpeter Randy Brecker, it was difficult for them to pronounce each other's names. "It's hard for me to say Er-an-dee," said Eliane as her Brazilian accent wrestled with his American consonants and vowels. "It was hard for him to say El-ee-yah-nee. So we're just Mr. and Mrs. Sweetie."

Randy Brecker, one of the most versatile musicians of his generation, was already established when Eliane Elias first came to New York in 1981. He'd worked by then almost 20 years around New York, a sought-after soloist on jazz and pop albums all across the spectrum, a pioneer of fusion with *Blood, Sweat and Tears*, also with *Dreams*, and a composer and arranger with the popular band he'd fronted with his brother, saxophonist Michael. He'd fallen by a studio one night when his brother was recording with a newcomer.

"Peter Erskine said he was doing this demo with this great Brazilian pianist and if I wasn't doing anything I should come by

and bring my horn. I did but then I heard the music and it was unbelievably hard. My brother was in the booth with his head in his hands going 'God, it's so hard!' I just snuck out. I didn't want to be asked to play."

"I saw this guy walk in with a cap, but I didn't pay any attention," said Eliane. "I was into the music."

Soon thereafter they were working together with drummer Bob Moses. "When I first walked into the rehearsal," said Eliane, "I pretty much knew everybody but Randy. I saw this guy with a little grey in his beard. I had this real image when I looked at him. I said this guy is settled, married—but actually, that's what he is now!"

"We played a gig neither of us will ever forget at Lush Life," said Randy. "Eliane lived around the corner, so every night I'd drive her home. And that was it."

"I remember the things he said to me, that I play so nice. We got married in about eight months. When I moved here, the last thing I thought about was marriage and children."

"Her music was really the totality of her life at that time. She wasn't planning on getting involved."

And along with being involved personally, soon they were involved musically with a band playing colorful Brazilian-American jazz and fusion, funk and samba. Only, once their daughter Amanda was born, being away together on tour became difficult—and also, something else.

"We really worked hard together and really shared," said Eliane, "but when we rehearsed the musicians always talked to him. I was his *wife*."

"It was very important that Eliane establish herself without me," said Randy. "We still work together but we stagger it and it's actually worked for the better financially and musically. We both have a lot of stuff we want to do. Even with my wife it's hard to be a co-leader. It's easy to be a sideman and easy to be a leader, but when you have to discuss every musical move with someone it gets to be disconcerting, so we basically work separately except when we'll do some gigs with a band or we'll do some duo gigs. We really enjoy that, just the two of us."

And the two of them, happily and parallel, play on. . . .

Eliane's Story

"I was born in São Paulo, 1960. I grew up in a real musical family. My mother [Luci Elias] played classical piano and still plays. When she was expecting me she was practising six or seven hours a day. When I was born, her first comment about me was, 'She has the hands of a pianist!' Mother's blessing! I always heard music in the house. She's a great jazz fan. She has a collection: Art Tatum, Bud Powell, Erroll Garner, Wynton Kelly, Nat King Cole, Monk. That's all I heard, and the classical things. I was always into it. I'd hear Erroll Garner play and I'd cry. Everybody would go to the beach but I would stay to listen to records. I started playing when I was seven."

Alongside the usual classical lessons, by age 12 she'd also learned standards from a night club pianist—and wanted more. "Zimbo Trio opened a great school in 1973 and it's still the best. Amilton Godoy became my teacher. I remember he showed me around the school and said, 'You're going to have several teachers until you get to the point when maybe I'll teach you.' I played for him and he said, 'You're going to be *my* student.' I went through the whole program with him and finished when I was 15."

Soon she was playing in clubs and even teaching some students herself, all the while finishing high school. "It was very hard. I was at a very strict Italian school and had to get up at 6:30, and I was teaching two, three afternoons a week, and I was playing." It's only natural Eliane was so intense—she's a Paulista. "São Paulo is very cosmopolitan, an enormous city. It's where the business is, where all the money is. It's very hard-working and I'm very much like that. I'm never sitting down—except at the piano. I'm always going. I'm definitely a Paulista, very agitated!"

Night life in São Paulo was just as active. "We had a lot of jazz clubs. I started at 15 playing restaurants, little concerts, a club called Baiuca, another called Paddock, a very famous jazz club called Opus 2004." Eliane's father, an industrialist, wasn't worried that this teenager was playing night spots. "I was very together and serious about the music and my family was very supportive. All the rehearsals were at my house. I ruined my mother's living room with all the instruments, but everyone was welcome. I worked mostly with a trio, with saxophone players a lot and sometimes guitar, but I've always liked a trio." And she knew what she wanted. "I'd do TV things or radio, and in interviews I always said I'd go to New York and be a professional musician."

When she was 17, Eliane joined a touring show with the popular guitarist Toquinho and the great Brazilian songwriter Vinicius de Moraes. She worked with other stars, but eventually the Brazilian scene wasn't enough. "I got to feeling that to reach professionally

RANDY BRECKER: "Eliane, much more than me, is truly an artist. It's hard to separate her piano playing from her compositions. It's all one thing. She plays like nobody else and her compositions are like no one else's. It's due to the many influences this country and Brazil have had on her. And the one way people haven't heard her yet is when she plays classical music. That's when you really hear the artist come out, and it's unbelievable. You'll hear things that supposedly great classical pianists have played and Eliane plays it and you realize that's the way it's supposed to be played. When she does her first classical record, it's gonna blow everybody's mind."

ELIANE ELIAS: "I haven't met many people like Randy. He's one of the few who's capable of doing anything. He can fit into anything, any style. That amazes me, how he can fit into different bands and different grooves and play different music, add so much to it and still have so much of his own personality. That's something I admire so much. I don't think I have that. It's hard for me to fit into so many different things or to sight-read like he does. Randy is extremely gifted."

what I wanted, Brasil was not the right place. There were a lot of talented musicians in Brasil but they weren't as exposed to jazz as I was. I'd studied jazz so seriously. I'd write out everything by Art Tatum, Bud Powell, Oscar Peterson, Bill Evans, then McCoy, Chick, Keith, Herbie. I'd write out their solos, play with them, analyze everything to get the conception. I was listening to Eddie Gomez and I heard Eddie's sound in my ear, or I'd hear Jack DeJohnette or Steve Gadd or Stanley Clarke. I wanted to play with them. I also didn't want to come to New York to be a student, so I got all the Berklee stuff by correspondence. I wanted to move when I felt ready and secure to be a professional."

Several jazz musicians traveling to Brasil, in particular Panana Francis, encouraged Eliane, and someone even offered work in New York, but it wasn't quite time yet. Instead, at 21, she traveled around Europe for a while. "I was in Paris [in 1981] when I saw Eddie Gomez. I didn't speak much English so we talked in Spanish and French. I showed Eddie a tape and he made me feel good and he gave me his number. That was the last drop I needed. I went back to Brasil, and in two weeks I came to New York."

Eliane's mother came along to help. "She's my best friend. She's responsible for whatever I've done. She's the strength behind me. We found a great place on 22nd Street. I came with some money I'd saved. I went to Steinway and they were very nice to me from the beginning. They gave me a professional rate. I rented a piano, got what I needed, then my mother went back. And here I am! Now what am I gonna do? I looked who's playing where and started going to clubs. I'd say, 'Hello, here's my tape!'"

Though she was offered some gigs at piano bars, that wasn't what she'd come for. "I could have done that in Brasil. I said I'll wait." After some jams, drummer Bob Moses offered Eliane some gigs, with Eddie Gomez, and work with Ronnie Cuber and others followed. Christine Martin became her manager and suggested that Eliane record a demo. "I said okay. 'Who should I get? Who can sight read great?' I had some hard tunes. I was always listening to Steps Ahead at 7th Avenue South and I got Peter Erskine, Eddie Gomez, and Mike Brecker to do two cuts. Mike Mainieri said he wanted to produce it. I didn't see it then but I was in the room with Steps and their manager was my manager. It looks like destiny now. We did that tape and right after that, Steps signed with Elektra/Musician [in '83] and they invited me to play with the band. That took me away from my own thing but I got excited. We did the Steps record and started touring. I stayed with them for a year."

While working with Steps, Eliane and Randy were married—and both wanted to play more. "Steps was a co-op band and I was a sideperson. It was a great experience but I didn't get to play as many solos as I wanted. I'd married Randy and it seemed at that time that the best thing we could do was to play together and co-lead. I was pregnant when we started working together and we did a record named after our little girl, Amanda." Even as good as

the music was, it wasn't yet what she'd come for. "It was great playing with the trumpet, but I kept feeling the trio."

Illusions, her first solo release from 1985, was aptly-titled. It's the album she'd dreamed about in Brasil—Eliane playing standards and originals with a trio, Eddie Gomez or Stanley Clarke on the bass, Steve Gadd or Al Foster or Lenny White at the drums. "It was everyone I'd wanted to play with except Jack DeJohnette—and he was on the next one!" In '87, *Cross Currents*, her second solo release, featured Gomez again, DeJohnette or Erskine, and with classics of Bud Powell and Charles Mingus, some popular songs, and a variety of originals, it's the most representative album she's done.

The Brecker Brothers guest on several tracks of her newest release, *So Far So Close*, with Eliane playing more synthesizer. Though she often works with electronics, it's the acoustic piano Eliane loves best. "That's where my heart is. I like doing the other things but I get more satisfaction playing straightahead. I love the communication with a trio. If it's fusion, I'll go somewhere into the Brazilian thing. *So Far So Close* is another side of me. These tunes, they're simple, melodic, they need horns and colors. I'd done two straightahead albums, so why not this other side? I'm not playing many solos. It's the arrangements, the colors. But in general what I like is playing straightahead."

What she'll do next is again acoustic, again with a trio, yet also a return to her roots in Brasil. "I'm doing my next album with Eddie and Jack, a whole album of Jobim. I thought it would be interesting and challenging. It's very beautiful music and I want to play some of the tunes that aren't known here. It's not very much trio music but I want to do Jobim in a jazzistical way. And later this year another album will be released, maybe with some electronics; but the ideal thing for me is to have both, the acoustic trio and the other side."

And there's yet a third side to come. "I always did classical work just to have the technique to play the ideas I have, but I've gotten more into it, into the piano as more than a percussion instrument, as a string instrument. It's not the same attack. It's touch and pressure on the strings. It's changed a lot of my concepts musically and I intend to do a classical album, a mix of composers I like—Rachmaninoff, Ravel, some Bach—but I've got to be maybe three months home to be ready, and I don't know when I'll have time!"

Randy's Story

"I was born in Cheltenham, just outside Philadelphia, in 1945. It's not a very musical township but I came from a very musical family. My father [Bob Brecker] is a piano player and also a songwriter and singer. He loves music, particularly trumpet players; so when I was young, my earliest recollections were listening to great trumpet players on the hi-fi. Clifford Brown played a lot in Philadelphia. Clifford and Dizzy and Miles were three of my father's favorites. So, when I was offered the choice of trumpet or clarinet in the third grade, I gravitated to the trumpet. That's all I ever heard at home. I started lessons at eight and I've been struggling with it ever since."

Randy and his brother Michael became jazz musicians, but his sister Emily, the only sibling to graduate with a music degree, became a classical pianist. "We always had a lot of instruments in the living room: drums, bass, vibes, an organ, and we had a little band around the house. We'd have jam sessions every weekend with local guys from Philly. I got a lot of hands-on experience at an



Randy Brecker and Eliane Elias will play some duets on tour this year—but their best "composition" together is their daughter, Amanda Elias Brecker.

"She's so talented," said her mother. "She plays beautiful piano. She plays her daddy's tunes, some of my tunes, and she composes, makes lyrics. I couldn't do what she does at her age."

"She has amazing ears, far better than mine," said her father. "She's become a big focus. We put a lot of time and energy into Amanda and it's always a complete pleasure. Everything else we do pales by comparison."

early age. My father taught me tunes and basically I just learned by ear. I didn't know anything about harmony. I pretty much learned from records, the more lyrical players like Chet Baker and Miles. I'd start with ballads, with the melody, and try to copy their phrasing, the little things they did to make everything sound so great. I took trumpet lessons with a great teacher, Tony Marcione, who'd also taught Lee Morgan. That was classical but he had a jazz background. I got a lot of experience with guys from Philly in the music scene happening downtown. They had a lot of kids my age playing in big bands. And I also would sit in with an unsung hero of the alto saxophone, C Sharpe. He's been in New York for years now and still plays unbelievably great. He had a regular gig at a club called the Proscenium and, when I was 15, I'd sit in. I didn't start learning in a technical fashion until Indiana University with Jerry Coker and Dave Baker."

After a festival at Notre Dame, the IU big band was offered a three-to-four month tour of Asia in 1966. Randy stayed behind and traveled around Europe, especially in Munich with saxophonist Don Menza. Randy eventually settled in New York and transferred to NYU—but his real schooling was playing around the scene. "Clark Terry was a judge at some collegiate festivals I'd

played. He remembered me and was one of the first people to help me. He'd just started a big band with Phil Woods and he got me on that with Ernie Royal, Snooky Young, Jimmy Owens, Marvin Stamm. We didn't work that much but Clark recommended me for gigs. And another friend, Allan Faust, recommended me. I was pretty aggressive, going out and trying to sit in, get my name around. Things were a lot more open then. It was easier to have jam sessions, plus there were a lot of rehearsal bands."

Randy's first professional work was playing with Larry Elgart, usually on weekends at dances across mid-America. Other big band work followed with Clark Terry, Duke Pearson, Chuck Israels. "And besides all these, every day I could go up to Lynn Oliver's studio on 86th Street and there were always rehearsal bands." Chris Swansen, Dave Berger, Kenny Dorham, and Joe Henderson all fronted bands, and eventually Randy also joined Thad Jones and Mel Lewis.

Score, a record for Solid State and his first with his name up front, was his brother Michael's first professional recording. Hal Galper composed several tunes and Larry Coryell was featured. "It was a pretty good record considering I was 21. I hadn't really developed as a composer. There were four of my tunes, all pretty melodically oriented and geared toward flugelhorn."

Playing his own music became more and more important. "I'd established myself as a free-lance trumpet player and I also wanted to be known as a jazz soloist. Being a bandleader came after working with Horace Silver and seeing how he approached his music, the fact that he'd written all his own tunes. I started re-evaluating my goals and realized a lot of the other things I had to do besides just being a good trumpet player."

Working with Silver's band (1968-'69) happened after a year with Blood, Sweat and Tears, one of the first important rock-jazz bands. "I was one of the last guys to be hired. They'd already started rehearsing and already formulated the concept, a small big band sound in a hard-rock context. We did the first record, *Child Is Father To The Man*, but I really wanted to play more. The horn section played parts. We were featured but there weren't a lot of horn solos, maybe one a night. So when Horace called, I wasn't thinking career, I was thinking music and jumped at the chance to work with an idol. Horace had a very good band then—Billy Cobham, John Williams, Bennie Maupin."

Randy quit BS&T the same night singer Al Kooper was axed. "I liked Al and said, 'You guys'll never make it without Al.' I talked Lou Soloff into doing the gig and about six months later, they did the album that sold about nine million! I remember I was on the road with Horace and once in a while we'd be in the same town—but they'd be playing The Spectrum in Philly and we'd be playing a little club called Pep's. They'd all come down in limos! But I never regretted it at all."

When not working with Horace Silver, he also played for Art Blakey off and on, but the club scene of the early '70s withered and neither band worked enough. Randy's brother Michael settled in New York about that time, and eventually both were featured with Silver's band, especially on the Blue Note album, *In Pursuit Of The 27th Man*. But it was in '69, with *Dreams*, that The Brecker Brothers became a sensation.

"Mike was working with an organ and bass duo, Jeff Kent and Doug Lubahn, and they also wanted a horn band but with the idea of freeing up the horns and trying for more collective improvisations. Mike approached me and we called Billy Cobham. Barry Rodgers played trombone and we added a guitarist, John Abercrombie." *Dreams* recorded twice for Columbia, classics of formative fusion but not hits. "I think the way we approached the music was a little too far out for the time. We'd have short tunes and lengthy improvisations. We forged some new directions and had a big influence but we never quite went over commercially."

After bassist Will Lee and keyboardist Don Grolnick replaced Lubahn and Kent, the musicians became a working unit beyond *Dreams*. "We became like a self-contained group that could play a lot of different styles. If people thought of one of us, they thought of all of us, and things just blossomed." Randy became one of the regulars around the New York studios and work generated work. Randy was also featured with Larry Coryell's band The Eleventh House and both brothers joined Billy Cobham's band. The Brecker Brothers as a band became inevitable.

"I was writing and arranging a lot. We were living on Carmine Street with the drummer Chris Parker and we'd become friendly with the guitarist Steve Khan. David Sanborn would come by and we'd have like a jazz-funk-rock rehearsal band. I was heavily electrified by then." By 1975, they had signed with Arista, their first record selling close to 100,000. *Back To Back*, the second record, featured a vocal they'd whipped up called "Sneaking Up Behind You"—and sold close to 200,000. "I never thought it would sell as much as it did. We were together six years and did six albums."

Randy's music, while rocking, was always rooted in jazz—though much of the band's appeal was to the r&b audience and the title song of the third record, *Don't Stop The Music*, was downright disco. "We'd kind of lost our focus." Other and better albums followed—*Heavy Metal Be-Bop*, recorded live; *Detente*, produced by George Duke; *Straphanging*, produced by the brothers—but by the early '80s, the brothers needed something else.

"We'd played together incessantly for 10 years. We weren't really breaking up but decided to take a break from doing the funk and fusion thing. It had gotten a little tiresome. We were involved with 7th Avenue South and one of the groups that developed out of that club was Steps, featuring my brother. I played for about a year with Jaco Pastorius. Unfortunately, we never got recorded as a small group. It was myself, Bob Mintzer, Peter Erskine, Othello Molineaux on steel drums, occasionally Don Alias. It was just great. I didn't really care that I wasn't the leader. I loved Jaco's music. Unfortunately, towards the end, when we all had great plans for the group, Jaco started going off the deep end and the thing just slowly dissolved."

While working with Jaco's band, Eliane was working with Steps. They quit together and came together musically—until, at last, Randy determined himself to solo as a bandleader. *In The Idiom*, his first recording in years with his name alone on top, spotlighted Randy as a straightahead composer and also featured Joe Henderson. *Live At Sweet Basil*, to be released this year through MCA, offers more of the same with Randy's working quintet the last several years: saxophonist Bob Berg, pianist David Kikoski, bassist Dieter Ilg, and drummer Joey Baron—though drummer Dennis Chambers joined the band for a while on the road. *Toe To Toe*, his

newest release, is more contemporary. Jim Beard plays keyboards, composed several tunes, and produced the session. Yet even when he's playing fusion, Randy's music is, much more than most, elementally jazz.

And all the while he's playing his own music, he's nonetheless working with everyone else. "I still really enjoy being a free-lance trumpet player in New York. I enjoy the studio work and all these other gigs I get called for. It keeps everything so fresh. There's nothing more fun than just going to a rehearsal. I love rehearsing other people's music, most recently with Dr. John and, at the other extreme, Kenny Werner, earlier with Conrad Herwig and Richie Beirach. I try to keep that together because I enjoy it so much; but the main thrust is keeping my own group together, trying to maintain a record contract, visibility, and all the other things a leader has to deal with."

One possible project forthcoming is music in a groove he's become quite familiar with. "I approach each album separately as an entity and try to think of a concept beforehand. I think the next record might have a Brazilian slant. I feel almost funny doing it because sooner or later almost everybody does a Brazilian record these days, the music is so great. I'll probably call it *The Obligatory Brazilian Record*. I have a lot of material—and obviously my ties to Brasil these days are kind of close." **db**



MITCHELL SEIDEL

RANDY'S AND ELIANE'S EQUIPMENT

Randy Brecker: "I've just received a Yamaha 635 flugelhorn which I love. Trumpet-wise, I'm kind of floating between a Marcinkiewicz, made by Joe Marcinkiewicz in Burbank, and the Yamaha Heavy Wall, made with heavier metal. I like both of them for different things. I'm playing a Bach 3C mouthpiece mainly but I also have a couple of custom mouthpieces I use on occasion made by John Stark and Jeff Parke."

Eliane Elias: "What I like most is a Steinway, a piano. However, I have some synths and samplers that I work with. I have two Casio samplers, a Roland D50, a Yamaha KX88, an Alesis drum machine, a DX, and I have a McIntosh if I want to do some programming for performing. But still, what I like best is to play the piano."

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

Eliane's piano is featured on the first *Steps Ahead* record for Elektra/Musician (60168-1) and she's a guest on recent albums of Peter Erskine, Earl Klugh, and Toninho Horta. Randy's trumpet is featured on hundreds of albums with the likes of Stevie Wonder, Horace Silver, Art Blakey, James Taylor, Paul Simon, Charles Mingus, George Benson, James Brown, Diana Ross, Paul McCartney, Thad Jones and Mel Lewis, among countless others. The Brecker Brothers recorded six albums for Arista, highlights to be released this year on RCA.

Eliane Elias

SO FAR SO CLOSE—Blue Note CDP 7914112
CROSS CURRENTS—Denon CY-2180, Blue Note B1-48785
ILLUSIONS—Denon CY-1569, Blue Note BLJ-46994

Randy Brecker

TOE TO TOE—MCA 6334
LIVE AT SWEET BASIL—Sonnet SNTCD 1011, MCA release-to-come
IN THE IDIOM—Denon 88039

together

AMANDA—Sonnet SNTF-958, Passport PJ 88013

JOHN LEE HOOKER

By Josef Woodard

Continuing Saga Of The Boogie King

As the elder statesmen of the blues pass on, so passes a legacy carried on through the riffs of new generations of rock & roll guitarists. At 72, John Lee Hooker, the king of the boogie, is more than a symbolic figure—he's a living, working legend.

Over the last few years, Hooker has been intermittently busy, touring as he sees fit. Of late, though, Hooker's visibility is at an all-time high. Last year, he was featured in Pete Townshend's musical drama concept album, *The Iron Man*. More importantly, Hooker's new album, *The Healer*, is being received favorably at critical and popular levels. Perhaps you saw him on *Late Night With David Letterman*, boogie-ing with the "World's Most Dangerous Band" as Paul Shaffer pulled up a sampled tenor sax sound, or on MTV or VH-1. The iron man returns. "At this age," Hooker comments, "I am more famous than I've been in a long time."

At home in the California Bay Area suburb of Vallejo, Hooker speaks with a combination of pride, humility, and awe regarding recent turn of events. "This record's pretty big. It's been going through the roof. It is a good record, if I say so myself. It touches a lot of different brackets—the young folks, old folks, middle-aged, everywhere. They even play it on the radio stations now. If anybody would have told me that I would be influencing so many young people years back, I wouldn't have believed them. All these young groups are following in my footsteps, and I'm so happy that they're doing it. I love what I'm doing. That makes me feel good."

The Healer (Chameleon D4-74808) is an all-star affair, produced by longtime Hooker sideman Roy Rogers, a mean slide-guitar player with a large vision of what a Hooker album could be. Hooker, who has long exerted an influence over younger musicians, from the England blues invasion of the '60s forward, speaks fondly of the process of playing with his guest artists on the album. "They were all eager to do it. They're friends of mine; they admire me and I admire them. That's what brought it all on."

The title cut was a collaboration with Carlos Santana, a fellow-Bay Area musician who has crossed paths with Hooker on the road since the late '60s and has known Hooker since the early '80s. Based on a groove which Santana had contributed to the film *La Bamba*, "The Healer" is a three-way marriage. With Santana's identifiable



"It was a thrill to work with someone I've loved as much as John Lee. He's one of the last living connections between the Mississippi Delta and modern city blues. Besides, it's the steamiest musical erotica I've been involved with yet."

—Bonnie Raitt

Latin-rock rhythm base, his stinging guitar statements lay a bed for Hooker's rambling testimony, heard here in a context far from the realm of a boogie groove. It's an unconventional setting for Hooker, but a sign of the gaminess that the blues player still possesses.

To Santana, the blues entails much more than a traditional musical structure. "To me," Santana asserts, "they play the blues in Russia, they play the blues in El Salvador and in Italy. In Italy, they call it opera. Everybody has their own blues, whether it's flamenco or whatever. If the blues are going to survive, I think it's important that the blues be presented in a way that someone can say, 'That's the blues, but I can hear Beethoven or Miles Davis or whatever in there.' I'm not into bastardizing, but I am into going forward. John Lee understands that.

"The blues is not going to lose anything by embracing things from Segovia or from Milton Nascimento. It's all in how you articulate it."

Other cuts on *The Healer* are truer to the Hooker one-chord vamp style. On "In The Mood," Bonnie Raitt pays her respects with her deft slide licks and limber vocal interactions. Robert Cray, one of the blues success stories of the '80s, lines Baby Lee with his sleek guitar. "Cuttin' Out" features members of Canned Heat—that boogie band from the '60s that championed the Hooker groove (just as ZZ Top did in the following decade). Los Lobos, harmonica player Charlie Musselwhite, and George Thorogood also show up on the album, all doing cameo turns in honor of who Santana calls a "master bluesman." Some of the best moments, though, feature John Lee Hooker alone with his guitar, illuminating the sound with his trademarked stark beauty.

Hooker, born on August 22, 1917 to sharecropper parents near Clarksdale, Mississippi, was chastised by his minister father but supported by his stepfather, himself a blues musician circulating in the area. Music didn't become John Lee's livelihood until he was in his 30s. "I was determined to be a star when I left home at age 14. I did everything right when I got into Detroit. After a few years, different things happened to me.

"I wanted to get into the army, but I had to lie about my age to do it. At that time, the army was the thing to be in; every woman looked up to a soldier at that time. Now, I suppose, you're less of a person. After a time, they kicked me out and I'm glad they did, because as soon as they did, I started on the road to fame, you know. Maybe I wouldn't be doing this today."

Everything changed for Hooker when his hit "Boogie Chillen" was released in the late '40s. "Boy, that thing hit like a sledgehammer. That got a lot of things started." The classic John Lee Hooker sound hinges on the singularity of the boogie, a percolating rhythm-based style that often dispenses



TOM COPPI

JOHN LEE HOOKER'S EQUIPMENT

Hooker's favorite guitar is a Gibson ES-335, his current model of which was a birthday gift from Carlos Santana. He also has a Gibson Lucille model guitar endorsed by B.B. King and a semi-hollow body Epiphone. He plays through Fender Twin amplifiers.

JOHN LEE HOOKER SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

THE HEALER—Chameleon D4-74808
ALONE—Specialty 2125E
BLACK SNAKE—2-Fantasy 24722
HOUSE OF THE BLUES—Chess CH-9258
PLAYS AND SINGS THE BLUES—Chess CH-9199
BOOGIE CHILLUN—2-Fantasy 24706
SITTIN' HERE THINKIN'—Muse MR-5205

with traditional blues chord changes for a one-chord swampy-drone structure.

"Every young musician jumps on the boogie—just a funky, driving beat with no chords; but it's a son of a gun. It came from 'Boogie Chillen,' really. Everybody's doing it right now. When we play a boogie, the whole house gets up. We ride it like a pony," he laughs heartily. "We ride the wild horse."

As with other drone musics, Hooker finds the absence of chord changes liberating—the better to spin hypnotic rhythmic webs. "When you're locked into a chord pattern, you must follow that pattern, you've gotta do this. You can't afford to make a mistake. With this, you're not locked into a chord, you're locked into a beat" (he hums the signature boogie pulse). "ZZ Top jumped on that. They've got it down good.

"They used to call it boogie woogie, and I updated it. It was just a straight boogie, with no changes, a rocking beat—both the bass beat and a strong back beat on the drums and then some funky beats on the bass. Then everybody just rides. Climb to

35,000 feet and take your seat belt off."

The timelessness of the boogie has been proven at various points over the 40-year history of Hooker's active musical career. *The Healer* reasserts his spot in the blues world, a growing public sphere of interest. Hooker has been in and out of the public eye for most of his life, without ever quite leaving it.

"We was almost out," Hooker says, "but we're right back in there. I never said it, but I'm practically the only real blues singer that keeps up with the times, you know, goes with the flow of the young people and all. I keep up with them."

Which is not to say that Hooker is infatuated with the current state of rock guitar playing overall. "There are so many guitar players who are so good. But a lot of them sound alike. I'm not putting them down, but they don't have a style of their own. All of them sound . . ." (he imitates a sound like a buzzing beehive). "They all sound alike, they get loud, they've got fantastic sounds, but they sound like somebody.

"But me, I don't sound like nobody but John Lee Hooker. I don't have all those fantastic chords. I just have a funky beat and a drive."

Talking to musicians committed to the cause of the blues, the music takes on an almost religious importance. Santana, a blues crusader himself, remembers a conversation he had with Hooker about the symbolic backdrop of the blues tradition.

"He said, 'You know, Carlos, a lot of people go around saying that the blues came from gospel music, but that's a lie. The blues was born when God told Adam and Eve that they had to leave. I said, 'Well, that sounds like the gospel according to John Lee Hooker. I'm not going to dispute it.' God has had the blues ever since, and so have we, trying to get back in there."

Hooker has his own take on the resonance of this music that has kept him in varying states of public exposure.

"It's a crazy mixed-up world we live in. All over the world, people are hurting. You know, it ain't the money. You can have a roomful of money and still have the blues. I play and travel all over the world, and everybody is confused. That's what the blues are about. That's why I did the song with the idea of the blues as a healer. People listen to the lyrics of the song and feel it.

"When you have your houseful of money but you're lonely and sad, then you can spend all the money you want. When you get quiet, the hurting is right back there. It's worse; you've been drinking and you've got a headache. The next day, you're feeling sick and the one you love, she still ain't there. You can't buy love, you can't buy happiness."

It's an old song, but one of the most durable and most relevant to the human condition. Not to mention a spur to the expansion of the modern guitar player's vocabulary. db

MUSICAL MYSTERY TOUR

10th ANNUAL NEW MUSIC AMERICA FESTIVAL



ALL PHOTOS BY LONA FOOTE

By Howard Mandel and John Ephland

The New Music America festival, since its New York City debut in 1979, has sought definition. Is "new music" the outpouring of the iconoclastic "downtown" composers cited by Laurie Anderson from the Brooklyn Academy of Arts stage during the 10th annual NMA's gala benefit? At that premiere, the Soho generation was typified by Philip Glass, whose ensemble offered the shimmering climax from the '70s classic *Einstein On The Beach*, and Steve Reich, whose *Different Trains* was played by The Kronos Quartet.

Or is new music what's made by the latest-breaking rockers with aspirations and attitude—like The Butthole Surfers, who filled BAM's Opera House with throbbing volume, dense smoke, and proto-rock angst at the fest's finale, "Night of a Thousand Bands"? Are such age-old forms as the West African ensemble drumming of the Senegalese troupe Farafina, presented at the scrungy club The World, in any sense new? What about the reunion of electro-acoustic ironists Steve Lacy, Alvin Curran, Frederic Rzewski, Garrett List, and Richard Teitelbaum—known in the '60s as Music Elettronica Viva?

What does the New Music Alliance—presenters and musicians who advise NMA as it travels each year to a different American city (Montreal in '90)—think of jazz, which is arguably as new as its commitment to spontaneous improvisation? Contemporary black music was represented by trumpeter Lester Bowie's lively, showy Brass Fantasy with actors and a gospel choir; clarinetist John Carter's punctillious *Shadows On A Wall*, the concluding segment of his long-in-process suite; alto and soprano saxist Greg Osby's funk-anchored fusion (warmed by the voices of Amina Claudine Myers and Cassandra Wilson); suburban rap by The Brand Nubians; Ed Wilkerson's Shadow Vignettes; The World Saxophone Quartet (in which Arthur Blythe has replaced

Julius Hemphill) meeting African drummers, and the week-long artist-in-residence of composer-conductor-cornetist Lawrence Douglas "Butch" Morris at the Whitney Museum of American Art at the Philip Morris companies' world headquarters.

(Philip Morris sponsored NMA as part of BAM's Next Wave festival, with further support from the Recording Industry Council and eight participating not-for-profit venues. Producer collaborations on that scale is new, and kudos to NMA Director Yale Evelev for pulling it off.)

Anyway, what's so great about "new"? John F. Szwed wrote in BAM's festival *Journal*, "For new music the controlling metaphor these days is not so much revolution as it is exploration," a word historically linked to appropriation and exploitation. Every performance offers musicians new challenges, though many listeners might be pressed to admitting they return to their favorite acts for the familiar, safe, same old thing.

Yet uncounted thousands of youthful and middle-aged, mostly white folk attended November's nine-day New Music America, crowding more than 70 events at two dozen venues comprising some 100 performances by nearly 700 musicians at New York venues from grand BAM to funky Experimental Intermedia, including Prospect Park's Picnic House, The Knitting Factory, The Kitchen, Dance Theater Workshop, and Merkin Concert Hall. Not in Miami, Philadelphia, Hartford, Washington D.C., Chicago, or the initial New Music New York did NMA galvanize such a large and curious musical community. As at previous fests, National Public Radio (via WNYC-FM and TV) offered broadcasts of concerts and Charles Amirkhania's "Speaking of Music" panel discussions. Perhaps the media transmitted something of the audience's excitement.

It was palpable from the moment the curtain went up on lusty vocalist Jevetta Steele with Little Village, a conventionally orchestrated pop band—DX 7, electric guitar and bass, traps, brass and reeds, lead and backup singers—that credibly fused gospel, soul, salsa, and jazz to put forth Bob Telson's distinguished songs (best known: "Calling You" from the film *Bagdad Cafe*). It persisted through Grateful Dead guitarist Bob



LOMA FOOTIE

opposite page: (from left to right) Israel "Cachao" Lopez, Bobby Previte, and John Carter; this page: (l to r) Urszula Dudziak; Heiner Goebbels performing at The Kitchen.



LOMA FOOTIE

Weir's assertion that "Pop musicians who otherwise would be influenced by past commercial successes will now be seduced by experimental attempts," through scarlet-clad Moondog's poetic prophesies, and a party in BAM's four playing spaces with entertainment by Chicago's Otis Clay, Kingston's Skatalites, Manhattan's Raybeats, and Haiti's Tabou Combo.

Formally, the fest began on a Friday with a "music/theater round robin" which sent ticket holders from Kip Hanrahan's star-studded but murky meditation on sex, violence, and urban rhythms (Chico Freeman had a fiery duet with Leo Nocentelli, but bright moments couldn't save the libretto) to brilliantly lit, ominously staged lip-syncing in mid-air by Julee Cruise (directed by David "Eraserhead" Lynch and Angelo Badalamenti) to Bowie's splat-lyrical trumpeting surrounded by slight sketches. From then on, a critic was on the run.

Hardly time to absorb John Carter's detailed score, thoughtful solos from Bobby Bradford, Marty Ehrlich, Craig Harris, Andrew Cyrille, and Don Preston, or the niceties of the vocal trio led by Terry Jenoure before rushing off to Osby's syncopated but somewhat stiff late afternoon set. Cab across the Brooklyn bridge and to the Upper West Side for the Society for Electro-Acoustic Music in the United States (SEAMUS) and be disappointed by high-tech sampling, the Yamaha MIDI piano, computer-enhanced ambient melodies, oboe-processing electronics, and obscure sounds by Jerry Hunt behind a wrathful Karen Finley.

By Monday, Butch Morris was ensconced in open-to-the-public rehearsals of his Conduction #15, *Where Music Goes II*. A dozen improvisers were free to bend their vocabularies to the commands of Morris' baton. By Thursday's concert with guest soloist Arthur Blythe, the ensemble had become a unit whose dimensions flexed to Morris' musical whims.

The Heiner Goebbels/Heiner Müller production *The Man In The Elevator*, a surreal song-cycle featuring Arto Lindsay, his German doppelganger, Fred Frith, and a trio of fierce horns, brought more power to its critique of conformity and bureaucracy than its ECM recording lets on. Robin Holcomb's *Angels At The*

WHAT'S NEW?

Whatever this year's New Music America was, it definitely wasn't all cut from the same cloth. Trying to define "new music" in this instance is like trying to nail jello to a tree. It was impossible to locate any overriding themes or styles that would unify everything into a tidy bundle—originality, feigned or otherwise, seemed to be about the only consistent facet of the whole program.

And yet, originality isn't the first word that comes to mind when considering the first performance I attended at the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM). Psycho killer/Talking Head David Byrne surfaced with a 14-15-piece Latin band poking his head into already-established genres of South American music such as mambo, samba, merengue, and pagode. In performance, his stiff-necked approach to the art of song—clearly demonstrated through his slightly deranged persona, odd lyrics, and robotic dancing—offered a genuine contrast to the sassy and fluid movements of singer/dancer Margareth Menezes. The band was generally hot, especially on the numbers where Menezes sang alone. Playing music from his new work *Rei Momo*, Byrne came across most often as a pleasing yet awkward troubadour crooning in a manner not unlike a manic Perry Como or Al Martino.

Yes, this was a white pop star asserting his unique personality in front of a genuine Latin band à la Paul Simon and his *Graceland* gang, Ladysmith Black Mambazo. Another avenue for this "renaissance man" to flash his ego? Maybe. Byrne was, however, clad in all-white, just like everybody else. The energy level was certainly consistent with any Talking Heads music I've seen or heard. And, by the time the show was over, the packed—and truly regal—BAM Opera House was on its feet, jumping up and down, having a good ol' time. Taking this Talking Head that dances too seriously can be foolhardy. Was it "new music"? Not really. Byrne does represent a bridge between worlds at NMA, those of pop music and the world of exploration and risk. Maybe he wasn't risking a whole lot, but the music was convincing . . . and fun. (See "Caught" for another perspective.)

Later on that evening, *Miniature*—Tim Berne on alto, Joey Baron on drums/processed drums, and cellist Hank Roberts—played amidst (and under) the thunderous pounding of disco dancers in the room upstairs at The World. At one point, Berne—who looks more like a college quarterback than a serious avant/off-the-wall musician—stated something to the effect, "We apologize for the battle of the bands. We'll do our best nonetheless." The all-standing basement crowd was split into two distinct camps: those that roamed and those hugged—the stage, that is. *Miniature's* intensity played off that of their surroundings with tight yet seemingly unstructured wailing and occasional ensemble work. Baron's electro-sonics preceded his smash-and-bang attack on drums while Berne and Roberts played in spurts of their own. Not for the meek and mild.

Other significant performances included John Carter's *Shadows On A Wall*, Robin Holcomb's *Angels At The Four Corners*, Heiner Goebbels' *The Man In The Elevator*, monologist Karen Finley in duo with sonic humorist Jerry Hunt at the SEAMUS Computer Music Festival, and Butch Morris' "Conduction" workshops. (See Howard Mandel's accompanying review.)

Power Tools, '89 version—Ronald Shannon Jackson on drums, bassist Melvin Gibbs, and newcomers Pete Cosey and David Gilmore on guitars—did two shows at The Knitting Factory. From those I talked with, it was the second show (the one I attended) that cooked. Well, from where I stood, it was pretty apparent that, among other things, Cosey didn't

know the material, Gilmore was there to serve as an adhesive, and Jackson's drumming was only occasionally on the money. Melvin Gibbs was the backbone to an otherwise dull, repetitive, and seemingly uninspired series of funk jams based on a number of melody-riffs. If there was free music involving an "organic language" and the "making of internal musical decisions," as Gibbs puts it, something got lost in the translation.

On the other hand, the following night's Knitting Factory show of Curlew with Amy Denio was an interesting mix of poetry and music. Curlew, led by saxophonist George Cartwright and normally an instrumental band of "genre-splicing" blues, jazz, and rock, was joined by singer Amy Denio in performance of text by poet/lyricist Paul Haines. The music worked well with voice; a twist for this reviewer considering my image of the band. In sometimes idiosyncratic, sometimes formal arrangements, Cartwright's sax crossed lines not only with Denio's voice but served as nice counterpoint to Tom Cora's cello and Davey Williams' guitar. Ann Rupel on bass and Pippin Barnett on drums completed the ensemble. The nature of Denio's appearance was a regular feature of this year's fest on two counts: first, as with Haine's poetry, the spoken and sung word was combined with music; and second, women played a major/significant role in many of the performances.

Back at BAM, Ed Wilkerson—Chicago-based saxophonist, bandleader, and AACM member—and his 25-piece big band, Shadow Vignettes, offered up a spirited brew of big band jazz, at once tightly-knit and raucous. Like other bands from Chicago (e.g., Sun Ra and The Art Ensemble), Wilkerson's assemblage displayed a form of controlled anarchy that treats an array of jazz styles as a creative springboard. In this, their New York debut, the group's charts—including those for the showcase commission, *Defender*—paid homage to big band greats (Ellington and Basie, among them) while freely (and humorously) modernizing the role of the ensemble's various sections. Trumpeter Rod McGaha, in particular, as a soloist, mixed crowd-pleasing pyrotechnics with sincere expression.

"Controlled anarchy" . . . now *there's* a unifying term for this collection of otherwise disparate musicians, composers, writers, poets, dancers, actors, cartoonists. . . .

—john ephland

Four Corners gave singer Jearlyn Steele-Battle the one rousing spiritual among some 20 mournful tunes shared by Syd Straw, Peter Blegvad, and the composer herself, whose melodies were dramatically orchestrated by Wayne Horvitz.

Compared to those pieces' theatricality, Jay Clayton and Urzula Dudziak's *Electronic Choir* was cheerful, informal, and surprisingly focused on the cutting edge of scat: Dudziak expanding her voice with dividers, phasers, followers, and similar gear, Clayton mostly concentrating on subtle throat and mouth tones. If they'd been five, their work would have been almost as rich and more immediately digestible than the burbling stew Music Elettronica Viva mixed at The Knitting Factory. But Steve Lacy and Garrett List's flavorings of the thick soup from Alvin Curran's digital and Richard Teitelbaum's analog synthesizers, spiced by Frederic Rzewski's piano quotes of nursely rhymes and political themes resulted in music to savor.

After MEV, Shannon Jackson's seemingly unfocused outbursts of drum energy seemed abusive, and Farafina, so satisfying on their recent Capitol-Intuition release, a case of too much too late. Next night, the Brooklyn Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Tania Leon was half-satisfying. *For Your Eyes Only* proved John Zorn can compose for winds and percussion the effects his game strategies usually generate. Butch Morris' *Dust To Dust*, after a promising start, ended abruptly. Robert Moran's *Open Veins* had pounding drums that overwhelmed other insistent effects. Gloria Coates' *Music On Abstract Lines*, with the sections "Vertigo," "Suspicion," and "Frenzy" referring to Hitchcock thrillers, worked well, in the modern atonal symphonic idiom. However, Moondog's suite of solemnly arranged ditties was appreciable only for its sustained innocence.

NMA ended with a four-stage circus: Ethiopian Aster Aweke and the Cambodian refugee Thoeung Son Group assimilating into the American mainstream; Bobby Previte's Pocket Orchestra artfully contrasting the timbres and polyrhythms of his *Claude's Late Morning*; David Murray blowing hot, Blythe fat and juicy to African percussion; The Ordinaires riffing smart-alecky; The Butthole Surfers exploding pretensions. Masterful Cuban-born bassist Israel "Cachao" Lopez, with the Son Primero group and flutist Dave Valentin, made the final statement at NMA '89.

In Cachao's experienced hands, freshness and finesse meant more than strained experimentation, substance triumphed over style. Playing four decades of respectful elaboration on a tradition that's kept its meaning, Cachao suggested that new music is something of value, presented to those who've never heard it before.

—howard mandel



Lawrence "Butch" Morris conducts at the Whitney Museum of American Art.

LONA FOOTE

by BROOKE COMER

Jazz is certainly the most creative musical idiom, given the proclivity for individual expression, or style, which defines the genre. But the fact that style is defined by such a notable few suggests that imagination and motivation, requisite to self expression in any art form, aren't always pushed to the limit. Alto saxophonist Kenny Garrett's recent album, *Prisoner Of Love*, proves that he's pushing that limit. Miles Davis salutes his search for style in his recent autobiography stating, "Younger musicians today . . . want to have what they call their own styles. But they're copying runs and licks that were already laid down. A few . . . are developing their own style . . . Kenny Garrett is one of them."

What specific style is Garrett honing down? "You'd have to talk to Miles about that," laughs the sax player who joined Davis after stints with the likes of the Duke Ellington Orchestra with Mercer Ellington, Mel Lewis, and Art Blakey. "Style is very difficult to describe; it's someone having something different, and expressing that difference. I think everyone has their own style. Individual expression is what jazz is all about, it allows you to express yourself, to develop an inner strength." Many musicians have their own styles, but Garrett's distinction is between individual expression and innovative expression; "there aren't," he notes, "many musicians who are innovators."

What's holding back innovation? "Artists fear they won't win mainstream acceptance," Garrett suggests. His early decision to cultivate his own sound gave him a singular goal. Rather than imitating a generic "fame formula," he was able to metabolize different influences—from the strong bebop tradition in his hometown of Detroit, to James Brown and Gladys Knight, to Blakey's big band—without subjugating his personal taste.

Garrett was a teenager when he made a conscious decision to establish his own sound. "Lou Rawls was on the radio. My father asked me who that was playing, but I was too young to distinguish back then. He said, 'You should be able to tell who people are by their sound.' That stayed in my mind. I knew I wanted to have a style that was identifiable, that was Kenny Garrett."

Everyone in Garrett's family sang or played an instrument, and his approach to music was a natural

evolution, starting with a toy sax on which his tenor sax-playing father taught him the G scale. Private lessons didn't get serious until high school, "which I think was better because by then, I *knew* I wanted to pursue a career in music." He also *knew* he didn't want to play in his high school band; "I wanted to play Ronnie Laws and Grover Washington tunes, not etudes and hymns." Bill Wiggins, Garrett's high school band director, and a formidable influence on his career "took me aside and said, 'You're gonna play in the band.' I said, 'No I'm not going to play.' We ended up having a fist fight and I don't know who won, but I know after that, I played in the band. And we're still friends, we just have to have a fist fight every so often."

While Garrett was building a reputation as one of the top young sax players in Detroit, he was also accumulating influences from King Curtis, John Coltrane, and "the bebop that was in the air at the time. Bebop was considered to be hip, it was something different. James Brown records were fine, but there was something about this *other* music that was more challenging." Garrett didn't come on to jazz till later. "When you're first starting, you tend to listen to more commercial music, your friends want to hear you play like so and so, but I never liked to imitate; I'd play the melody, then go into something different. So I only knew Cannonball from 'Mercy, Mercy Mercy.' When someone told me Cannonball played with Miles Davis, I said, 'What are you talking about?' That's when I started

getting into jazz."

Garrett got exposure to big bands through former Ray Charles bandmember Marcus Belgrave, a bastion of Detroit's music community. But when he was called to sub with Ellington in 1978, a gig that turned into a three-year stint with the band, he still had plenty to learn. The Ellington experience taught Garrett to blend. "When you're playing in an 18-piece band, you learn to not stick out. I worked on trying to blend, and make the best music possible, which I try to do with everyone now." He applied that blending principle when working with Mel Lewis and Dannie Richmond; "You can add your own ingredients, but they have to fit in with what's going on."

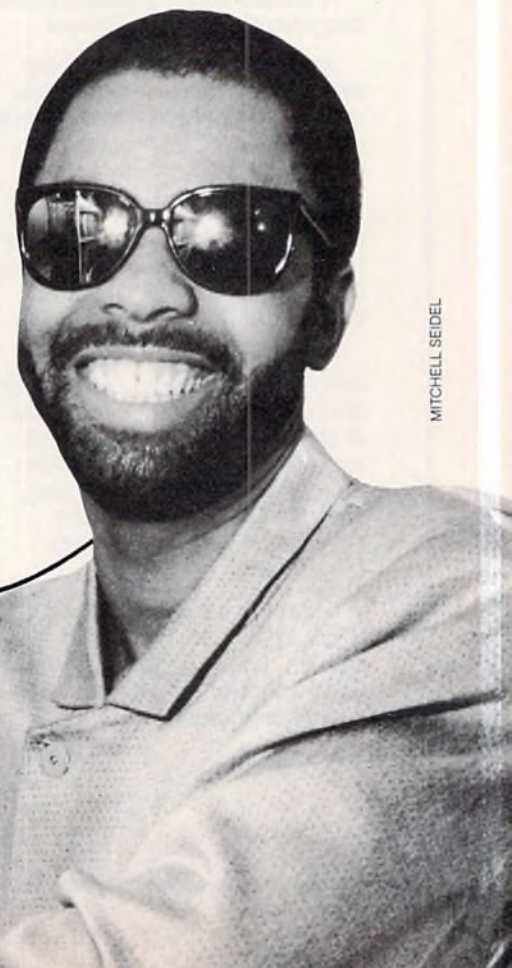
"Blending" with Ellington, Woody Shaw, and Freddie Hubbard didn't stop Garrett from stoking up his imaginative fire. "Playing different repertoires widens your horizons, keeps you fresh. I took from each group and I felt I was really growing. Playing in a band makes you want to practice and get better. The more kinds of bands you play with, the more kinds of 'better' you find. But if you don't have those outlets, those bands, you tend not to try to get to the next level."

New York's jazz resurgence started up around the time Garrett moved to the City in 1980. "Prior to that resurgence, there weren't many avenues for jazz players; you could practice, or play in a loft. When I moved here, Wynton Marsalis was around, and his youth and talent had something to do with starting the fire. Suddenly, there

KENNY GARRETT

THE SEARCH FOR

Style



MITCHELL SEIDEL

were a lot of opportunities for young people to play, people that could enhance you." That's what Garrett was looking for, "people to play with who would enhance me." He could have been swallowed up in the jingle industry, which he wouldn't have minded insofar as "it exposes you to a lot of different styles, and that's what keeps me going, as a musician and a person," but he resisted being pigeonholed as someone who plays a certain type of music.

Garrett came to town "looking for the guys who played more commercial music—and to this day I don't know where they are." He did find bassist/producer Marcus Miller one night at 7th Avenue South and sat in on a jam. Garrett played some funk, then a jazz tune. Later, when he brought Miller in to work on *Prisoner Of Love*, Miller remembered the jam. "He told me that since I was playing funk, they figured I could *only* play funk. He said, 'When we switched to jazz, we tried to lose you, man. Then we said, 'Wait a minute, this guy can *play!*' I guess that's something they do in New York."

Miles Davis realized Garrett could "play" when he first heard his tape. He recognized the sax player's versatility, and gave him space to stretch out and expand his burgeoning style. In that respect, "playing with Miles wasn't a departure for me as much as a continuation. It was a chance to work on a part of me that I hadn't been able to express yet. When I was playing with Art Blakey, I was looking at the music from a whole other perspective. It was a completely different texture and beat. I couldn't play any funk riffs in the Art Blakey band, but I was listening to funk all the time. We always hear things we don't actually play. Once I got with Miles, I found it wouldn't be out of place for me to play some of the funk and electronic things I was hearing." Even before he joined Davis' band in '87, Garrett knew "that Miles and I both liked Prince's music, and that he was going more for a James Brown-type groove on top of whatever he was playing. Since I'd been listening to that all my life, it was easy to fit in. We were both going in the same direction."

Prisoner Of Love was a new tangent in Garrett's musical direction, but he used elements from the past and present to forge his new signature. "The album was inevitable, something I had to do, especially having been exposed to Miles' music and hearing electronic instruments. I originally wrote 'Big Ol Head,' one of the tracks on *Prisoner*, for Miles. If you listen to the melody, you can tell it was definitely written for Miles. When he worked on that track, he said, 'Man, you wrote that song for me, didn't you?'" Garrett wrote a lot of tunes during his Art Blakey and Freddie Hubbard years, "but I couldn't cultivate contemporary, electronic sounds when I was hearing acoustically. When I joined Miles, I had the opportunity to combine what I was hearing, and playing."

Prisoner Of Love was conceived as an uplifting record. "It's got a romantic tone, with a relaxing pace. A lot of LP's start off with a fast beat, then they bring you down. I wanted to start off with a slow pace, and bring you up. I didn't feel I had to prove to anybody that I could play. Some people will like it and some won't. That's life."

When Garrett played with the Ellington orchestra, he always wanted to "do something modern, but I was too young to suggest it at the time." Tracks like "Put A Smile On Your Face" are reflective of the innovations he would have suggested. "I wanted to take sounds I was hearing from my Ellington years that were still in my head and put it in a small-band setting with a current sound. *Prisoner* gave me that chance." On "Smile," Garrett literally took from Ellington trumpeter Barrie Lee Hall, Jr. and trombonist Muhammad Abdul Al-Khabyr and had their two tracks mixed "in such a way that a lot of people think they're synthesizers."

"Smile" also borrows from the African chord progression that mesmerized Garrett while in Zimbabwe on an Amnesty International tour in '88, "There's a ragtime figure in there, gospel, and a reggae-type groove that somebody said felt like Bobby McFerrin, though that's *not* what I set out to do. One person who heard the tune said, 'Thanks for taking the past music and bringing it together with today's music.' That's what I tried to do."

Where will Garrett go from here? We can assume his next project will be, like *Prisoner Of Love*, both a departure and a continuation, a seeming contradiction like the name of the album, which refers to Garrett's bondage to his music "or to anything that you love with a passion, because the nature of that love imprisons you." Garrett is still searching—a search that is likely to stop "for something more than different, something with quality. You can be different but it doesn't mean you have quality. A lot of jazz musicians want to have the popularity of a rock star, but still play jazz. There are rock stars who want the creativity of a jazz musician. It's easy to get caught up in what other people think—and the fear involved is very restrictive."

"Now that Miles has said I have my own style, people who didn't notice me before will start to pay attention. They may say, 'Kenny Garrett, you're not supposed to play that kind of music. But, I will play whatever kind of music is right for me, no matter what people think . . . that's what the great jazz musicians did—they played what they heard. That's why music is out there—so you can absorb and learn from it, and keep moving. When you listen to an artist, that's their expression; you can try to understand where they're coming from spiritually but you have to move on. I can't be Charlie Parker. I can only absorb what he left for me, try to understand what he was doing. To me, that's what music is about, trying to move on." db



MITCHELL SEIDEL

KENNY GARRETT'S EQUIPMENT

If the sound of Kenny Garrett's Selmer Mark 6 saxophone could be imbibed, you'd recognize a full-bodied, well-aged cognac. That's the kind of warmth that works best for his taste, without sacrificing the action he likes. "When Selmer made the Mark 6, they let the instruments sit around for about 30 years so the metal had a chance to ripen," he explains. "That's the key to my sound."

Branford Marsalis recommended that Garrett try a straight alto made by Herbert Couf. "No one plays a straight alto," Garrett laughs. But he's been trying out the Couf "for about a month now, which is too early to make a judgment." He has noticed a definite difference, namely that the straight sax is bright. Garrett's complete collection includes two Selmer Mark 6's, one a gift from Miles Davis, a Selmer straight, and the Couf straight—and he's not adverse to trying others. "I'm still searching for the right sound for me, for something that will make my music different."

Garrett uses a Selmer size E mouthpiece: "I can play with any mouthpiece, but this one is comfortable. I've always used a size E." He uses Hempke size 3 reeds, cutting them only if they get too soft.

KENNY GARRETT'S SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader

PRISONER OF LOVE—Atlantic B2046-1

GARRETT 5—King K 28P 6494

INTRODUCING KENNY GARRETT—Criss Cross 1014

with Woody Shaw and Freddie Hubbard

DOUBLE TAKE—Blue Note B21K 46294

THE ETERNAL TRIANGLE—Blue Note B21S 48017

with Art Blakey and The Jazz Messengers

FEELING GOOD—Delos 4007

with The Duke Ellington Orchestra

MUSIC IS MY MISTRESS—Musicmasters CIJD-60185K

with Mel Lewis and The Jazz Orchestra

MAKE ME SMILE—Finesse 37987

with Miles Davis

AMANDLA—Warner Bros. 25873-1

with Charnett Moffett

BEAUTY WITHIN—Blue Note B1-91650

By Michael Handler

TAKE 6

Songs Of Joy

Take 6 travels light. No semis full of light racks and mixing boards. No large cases full of instruments jamming the backstage areas at their shows. In fact, there's no equipment at all—unless you count voices and clothes. There's lots of clothes (very stylish, too, and about 15 outfits per man), but there are only six voices, although at times it may sound like 16. Those voices collectively belong to tenor and music director Claude V. McKnight III, arranger/songwriter Mark Kibble, album co-producer Mervyn Warren, soon-to-be Doctor of Music Cedric Dent, songwriter and new

father David Thomas, and bass singer Alvin "Vinnie" Chea. After meeting at Oakwood College, a small Christian college in northern Alabama in 1980, the young group was originally known as Alliance, and held their early rehearsals in the resonate bathrooms of their dorms. The current lineup of singers still lives in the south, making their base around the Nashville area.

The backgrounds of the members of Take 6 may be diverse, but their lives are firmly rooted in the church. As practicing Seventh Day Adventists, they will usually not perform on the Sabbath between Friday and Saturday evenings, unless specific contractual agreements call for a gig at those hours. Even then, the location is usually a church where no alcohol is found. And unlike most backstage dressing rooms, one will not find a case of cold beer or smoke-filled air. This lack of roadside diversions can only help body and soul—and voice. Another help to the clean and hip sound of the group is found in the fact that all the members of Take 6 are musicians, besides being singers. Just as his piano playing years helped Bobby McFerrin achieve success as a solo singer, so, too, the musical and instrumental training by the individual members has aided them in their sense of time, rhythm, and harmony. However, they do not plan to use these various instrumental talents on their forthcoming album, due out in early 1990.

Like their stylish clothes, the a cappella music of Take 6 is performed with style—always in time, in tune, a seasoned ear may, from time to time, hear some familiar horn parts, or a quote from the Hi-Los or Singers Unlimited. It might be another reworking of a classic gospel tune, or an original, up-tempo number, but every song sounds fresh, clean, and full of joy.

It's this joy that makes their music and concerts so much fun. As original group member Claude McKnight said quite simply at the close of the group's recent tour with Al Jarreau, "If it's not fun, we don't do it!" As if to prove his point, the group had just jumped on stage to join Al in a "surprise" joint appearance on the



standard, "Teach Me Tonight." This was the first time these performers had actually sung together in their 32 dates, and the results were wonderful and, well, good fun. The fun is also apparent on stage as this self-titled "Christian Band" testifies to crowds across the country at venues as diverse as the Gospel Music Dove Awards to the Monterey Jazz Festival.

The music of Take 6 might sound secular and jazz-based at times, but the message never strays from their common goal of spreading the good news through song. Yet the group never sounds "preachy" from the stage; it is uplifting and joyous—the ultimate soul music. There is a challenge, too, in performing primarily religious music to straight-ahead jazz audiences. Claude admits that it's very different from the call-and-response of church. "We present the message in an attractive package, and hopefully the folks will leave the show humming a tune. We let the Holy Spirit take it from there." It is this message that unifies the group.

Music is not new as an expression of faith. This is especially true of the black experience, both in Africa and America. The rich musical and religious heritage that created gospel music is derived from the same sources as blues and jazz. Many former church singers have crossed over to the secular side of the river to great acclaim, such as Aretha Franklin and Sam Cooke. Others, like Rev. Al Green, have gone the other direction and back. But at no time has a musical group singing about primarily religious themes been embraced so quickly by gospel and jazz audiences alike. With one album, *Take 6* (Reprise 25670), the group has captured a multitude of awards, including two Grammys, four Dove awards (the gospel Grammy), and awards from TV's *Soul Train* and *Black Radio Exclusive*. At last count, the album has sold over 600,000 units, which makes the group's first record a gold one.

There have been numerous TV appearances, including the *Tonight Show* and two spots on the jazz-oriented *Sunday Night* with David Sanborn. The Spike Lee film *Do The Right Thing*



MICHAEL HANDLER

At the '89 Monterey Jazz Festival.

features two songs by the group. The 1989 *db* Critics Poll saw Take 6 win the Vocal Group category for TDWR and come in second behind Manhattan Transfer in the established artists voting. Even more impressive is their recent come-from-nowhere victory as first-place winners in *db*'s '89 Readers Poll for Vocal Group of the year. The real critics/fellow musicians are likewise generous in their praise. From Quincy Jones and Lena Horn to Stevie Wonder and Anita Baker, the phrases "absolutely thrilling," "pure vocal mastery," and simply, "They're bad . . ." are not uncommon. "Each person in the group has a distinct voice," says newcomer Scotty Wright (fourth place in the 1989 *db* Critics Poll, Male Singer). "They have a unique way to put jazz vocal group arrangements into a contemporary sound."

The sound Wright refers to has its roots in various places—the church, the lush harmonies of the Hi-Los or Singers Unlimited, spirituals, and even on do-woppin' street corners. "We like to take a spiritual and put it into our own package," Claude McKnight states. Just how much it is their own package is apparent in concert when, again getting back to the fun theme, the group will take their hipped-up jazz version of "Mary Don't You Weep" or "River Jordan" and suddenly shift the beat from 2 and 4 to 1 and 3. It makes one appreciate just how far gospel music has come.

The sound also recently caught the attention of Neil Hefti, who was sitting with Dizzy Gillespie at this past year's Monterey Jazz Festival. He was impressed with what he heard. "It's those wonderful arrangements," Hefti later said during a backstage interview. "They have all the highs and the lows—a full sound." Indeed, from a distance, hearing the group at an outdoor setting does give one the impression of a band, complete with electric bass and a horn section. The group's approach to singing is done with classic jazz combos in mind, which is one reason the group can do so well at jazz shows. Bass singer Alvin Chea explains that another reason for their success in jazz is the hipness of the audience. "For me, playing at a jazz festival is a challenge since the audience is so much more attentive [than in church]. They show you their appreciation *after* the songs."

The recent Monterey Jazz Festival crowd showed lots of appreciation for Take 6 after their first-time appearance there—so much so that Festival producer Jimmy Lyons had to allow the group a rare curtain call to quell the cheering crowd. Many other musicians and festival workers agreed that the Take 6 segment was a high point of the 1989 Festival. The success of Take 6 at a show like the MJF shows how gospel vocal music can move a hardcore, party-time audience, the kind Monterey is infamous for. There's no question that the audience wanted more.

With their new album—which includes more original material—to be released, and with an upcoming tour of Europe and Japan, it will be interesting to see if this reaction will be shared by audiences around the world. There's no reason to doubt, however, that the group will receive some kinda praise wherever they go. With the success they've garnered in a relatively short amount of time, the energy of these six talented young men seems as boundless as the joy and love they put into their music. **db**

Take 6, from left: Mervyn Warren, Claude V. McKnight III, David Thomas, Cedric Dent, Alvin "Vinnie" Chea.



GRACE BELL

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



QUINCY JONES

BACK ON THE BLOCK—Qwest/Warner Brothers 9 26020-2: [PROLOGUE (Q'S RAP)]; *BACK ON THE BLOCK*; *I DON'T GO FOR THAT*; *I'LL BE GOOD TO YOU*; [THE VERB TO BE]; *WEE B. DOOINIT*; *THE PLACES YOU FIND LOVE*; *JAZZ CORNER OF THE WORLD*; *BIRDLAND*; *SETEMBRO* (BRAZILIAN WEDDING SONG); *ONE MAN WOMAN*; *TOMORROW* (BETTER YOU, BETTER ME); [PRELUDE TO THE GARDEN]; *THE SECRET GARDEN*. (57:54 minutes)

Selected personnel: Gerald Albright, George Benson, Michael Boddicker, Ollie Brown, Ray Charles, Paulinho DaCosta, Andrae Crouch, Miles Davis, El DeBarge, Kool Moe Dee, George Duke, Sheila E, Nathan East, Ella Fitzgerald, Siedah Garrett, Dizzy Gillespie, Herbie Hancock, Ice-T, Paul Jackson, Jr., Al Jarreau, George Johnson, Louis Johnson, Big Daddy Kane, Chaka Khan, Michael Landau, Ivan Lins, Steve Lukather, Bobby McFerrin, Melle Mel, James Moody, Andy Narell, David Paich, Greg Phillinganes, Steve Porcaro, Ian Prince, John Robinson, Bill Summers, Take 6, Rod Temperton, Luther Vandross, Sarah Vaughan, Barry White, Larry Williams, Steve Wonder, Josef Zawinul.

★★★★

Rapmaster Q is here. He says he's "back." Doesn't say where he went. Evidently been out in the streets soaking up the rap. This isn't the jazz album you've been waiting for from Q. It's an arranger's dream, a producer's playground. Jones uses the highest musical technology on today's voices, organizing the diverse colors of rappers, scatters, strummers, beaters, and blowers within his slick stylistic view.

"Back On The Block" features a fine performance from Ice-T, with some nice African call-and-response lines. Herbie Hancock's keyboards rescue "I Don't Go For That" from r&b mediocrity (where's Michael?). Quincy's sequenced remake of The Brothers Johnson's "I'll Be Good To You" gives the album a kick start, with both Brothers in the band and Ray Charles and Chaka Khan doing vocals. It's class from beginning to end. Quincy gets great work out of Bobby McFerrin and other adventurous vocalizers on the celebratory "Wee B. Dooinit," but when Take 6 airs it out on the over-produced "Setembro," Take 3 would be sufficient. "Jazz Corner Of The World" is a concise jazz history rap with four-bar solos from masters like Miles, Ella, Sarah, James Moody, and Joe Zawinul, and sets up a funkified bluesy Benson-ized "Birdland."

"Tomorrow," with children's choir, proves a bit mushy, and other than Barry White's cameo appearance, "Secret Garden" never meets its potential. But "The Places You Find Love" is a magnificent pop production, and "One Man Woman" is one of the most solid and affecting

dance grooves of the past year.

Quincy's raps at times rise above the common jams of the day. The solid pop-funk efforts of Siedah Garrett, writer Rod Temperton, and percussionist Bill Summers should be noted. But it leaves you wanting more. Some sections are raw and brilliant, sometimes you wish the players were turned loose. And some of the ballads make me wish he'd done a whole rap album. Hey Q, don't stay away so long. (reviewed on CD) —*robin tolleson*



GERI ALLEN

TWILIGHT—Verve 841 152: *WHEN KABUYA DANCES*; *SHADOW SERIES*; *SKIN*; *A PLACE OF POWER*; *TWILIGHT*; *STOP THE WORLD*; *WOOD*; *LITTLE WIND*; *DREAM TIME*; *BLUE*; *BLACK POOLS*. (45:46 minutes)

Personnel: Allen, piano, keyboards; Jaribu Shahid, bass; Tani Tabbal, drums; Clarice Taylor Bell, vocals; Sadiq Bey, percussion; Eli Fountain, percussion.

★★★★

Sharp and funny and dense and funky without having to jump up and down about it. Geri Allen has a broad-based, consistent set of talents. As a player, she's got chops and depth to spare; as a composer, she's eclectic without being muddled, idiosyncratic without being self-aggrandizing.

The combination makes *Twilight*, her fourth release as a leader, a deeply challenging pleasure. Whether she's expanding the rubber-wrist vocabulary of Cecil Taylor and Don Pullen, slinging angular Monk-ish bars, or frolicking with an infectious lyricism à la Abdullah Ibrahim, she makes the piano's vast possibilities her own. Because her charts are no less far-reaching or thoughtful, she's unafraid to pull herself into the background, shading in a mesmerizing supportive texture either on piano or subtle synths while the cross-talking percussionists take flight or an arco bass creaks and groans. Of course, it helps that her trio-plus plays like it's mapped the insides of her skull.

Her compositions demonstrate how rich those insides are. Allen doesn't just borrow musical elements and jumble them up to try for some new pastiche or effect. Her pieces create their own coherence as you listen: they seem familiar in that eerie way even unfamiliar or new good work does. Here evoking a cityscape with belching or clanging electronics ("Stop The World") or painting a darkly melodic rural atmosphere ("Wood"), there recalling European classical models ("Blue") or African ones ("When Kabuya Dances"), Allen's writing—and her world—has the kind of muscular

breadth and depth of power that distinguishes Henry Threadgill's. Contemporary rather than trendy, Allen's odd-metered, shifting, vibrant pieces do what the best writing always does: creates a language that sketches the shadowy perceptions we call consciousness at a particular time. Which is why her growing body of work adds up to more than just a bunch of albums. (reviewed on CD) —*gene santoro*



JOHN LEE HOOKER

THE HEALER—Chameleon D4-74808: *THE HEALER*; *I'M IN THE MOOD*; *BABY LEE*; *THINK TWICE BEFORE YOU GO*; *SALLY MAE*; *THAT'S ALRIGHT*; *ROCKIN' CHAIR*; *MY DREAM*; *NO SUBSTITUTE*.

Personnel: John Lee Hooker, vocals, guitar (except cut 6); Carlos Santana, guitar (1); Chepito Areas, timbales (1); Armando Peraza, congas (1); Ndugu Chancler, drums (1); Chester Thompson, keyboards and synthesizers (1); Bonnie Raitt, vocal and slide guitar (2); Roy Rogers, guitar (2); Scott Matthews, drums (2); Robert Cray, guitar (3,8); Richard Cousins, bass (3); Scott Matthews, drums (3,8); Henry Vestine, guitar (4); Lorry Taylor, bass (4,10); Fito de la Parra, drums (4,10); Charlie Musselwhite, harmonica (4); Roy Rogers, slide guitar (4); Cesar Rosas, guitar (6); David Hidalgo, guitar and accordion (6); Louie Perez, drums (6); Conrad Lozano, bass (6); Steve Berlin, saxophone (6); George Thorogood, guitar (7); Steve Ehrmann, bass (8).

★★★ 1/2

During the blues revival of the '60s—when blues first began reaching a significant white audience—an assortment of gimmicks was devised to attract even more such new listeners. Blues artists like Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf were saddled with psychedelic sidemen, for example, while Big Mama Thornton was instructed to sing unlikely pop songs such as Rod Stewart's "Handbags And Gladrag's." For the most part, these production plays were heavy-handed, unsympathetic, and poorly received.

Fortunately, this is not the case with John Lee Hooker's *The Healer*. While the superstar lineup is an obvious commercial strategy—one which may horrify purists—the celebrity contributors here all play with supportive good taste and let Hooker bask in the limelight. The result is a pleasant, well-paced album, with some inspired, funky moments. Those cuts which drag do so because of Hooker's own shortcomings, which have existed throughout his 60-year/100-album career.

Hooker has always been most effective as a singer. He has a rich baritone voice, and

makes effective, suspenseful use of a hypnotic, whispered delivery. His vocals have remained strong, and he sings here with consistent passion and involvement, even in ultra-modern instrumental settings—like the opening title track, with Carlos Santana—which might seem to be well outside his stylistic range.

As a guitarist, however, Hooker is extremely limited, in terms of both ideas and execution. Many of his own compositions never change chords. He plays with a solid rhythmic groove, and is identified with several trademark blues riffs, but could hardly be considered an accomplished player. Accordingly, his solo outings here are the album's least interesting cuts. To hear Hooker at his best in this vein, check out his '50s and '60s material, which has been liberally reissued.

In addition to a fine performance with Santana, the most successful cuts here are "I'm In The Mood" with Bonnie Raitt, and "Think Twice Before You Go" with Los Lobos. *The Healer* may not rate with Hooker's classic material, but producer Roy Rogers deserves credit for so effectively presenting this venerable bluesman in a contemporary, commercial context. At the same time, Hooker's raw rural essence shines through, undiluted. (reviewed on LP)

—ben sandmel



MICHEL CAMILO

ON FIRE—Epic EK 45295: *ISLAND STOMP*; *IF YOU KNEW . . .*; *UPTOWN MANHATTAN*; *FRIENDS (INTERLUDE III/SUITE SANDRINE)*; *HANDS AND FEET*; *THIS WAY OUT*; *IN LOVE*; . . . *AND SAMMY WALKED IN*; *SOFTLY, AS IN A MORNING SUNRISE*; *ON FIRE*. (51:28 MINUTES)

Personnel: Camilo, piano; Michael Bowie (cuts 1,6,8-10), Marc Johnson, (2-4,7), bass; Dave Weckl (1,6,8), Marvin "Smitty" Smith (2-4,7,9), Joel Rosenblatt (10), drums; Sammy Figueroa, congas (8); Raul, flamenco feet (5).

★ ★ ★ ★

MICHEL PETRUCCIANI

MUSIC—Blue Note CDP 7 92563 2: *LOOKING UP*; *MEMORIES OF PARIS*; *MY BEBOP TUNE*; *BRAZILIAN SUITE NO. 2*; *BITE*; *LULLABY*; *O NANA OYE*; *PLAY ME*; *HAPPY BIRTHDAY MR. K*; *THINKING OF WAYNE*. (44:50)

Personnel: Petrucciani, piano, synthesizer, organ (3), vocals (7); Tania Maria, vocals (7); Joe Lovano, soprano saxophone (10); Anthony Jackson (1,5), Chris Walker (4,8,10), electric bass; Andy McKee (2,3,7,9), Eddie Gomez (6), acoustic bass; Lenny White (1,4,5,8,10), Victor

Jones (2,3,6,7,9), drums; Frank Colon, percussion (1,2,4-10); Romero Lubambo, acoustic guitar (4); Gil Goldstein, accordion (2); Adam Holzman, synthesizer (1,2,4,5,7,8,10); Robbie Kondor, synthesizer (1,4,5), synthesizer programming (2,6-8,10).

★ ★ ★ ★

Dominican Republic native Michel Camilo and Frenchmen Michel Petrucciani—both based some time now in New York—are kinsmen, related not by familial ties, but by a life-affirming fervor that's expressed through the mainstream jazz piano. They manage music formulated from jazz, blues, Latino, and European classical sources with technical aplomb, invigorating it by force of personality, invention, and integrity.

Camilo, who favors the standard trio format, is known for achieving transports of ecstasy on Latin dance rhythms, and his second outing, *On Fire*, certainly delivers rapturous instances. In "Island Stomp," the pianist, provoked by drummer Dave Weckl and upright bassist Michael Bowie, spins lustroly accented lines and pounds out chords pungently, giving tremendous melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic excitement to a funky piece rooted in West Indian musics. The breakneck title tune—composed by Camilo like virtually all the programme—threatens to explode when his wild, see-sawing Afro-Cuban punctuations interact with drummer Joel Rosenblatt's lean rambunctiousness: the pent-up tension does find glorious release when Camilo unleashes a rapid-fire sweep of the keyboard. Another south-of-the-border number, ". . . And Sammy Walked In," doesn't have him obtaining any dizzy heights, but this impromptu frolic with surprise studio visitor Sammy Figueroa manning congas conjures up the spirit of alter-horas camaraderie.

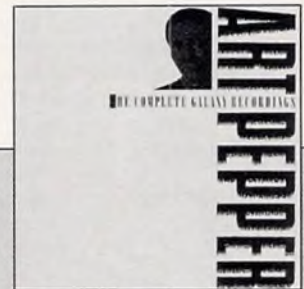
Beyond Latin-style ebullience, Camilo fills the struttin' "Uptown Manhattan" with imaginatively conceived piano that illuminates his bop conception; here his jaunty promenade's underscored by expert drummer Marvin "Smitty" Smith and able bass player Marc Johnson. There's a flowing naturalness to Camilo's bold, bluesy work in "This Way Out," while the moderately cheerful interpretation of the standard "Softly, As In A Morning Sunrise" invites thoughts of Ahmad Jamal's playful, teasing right hand.

Camilo owns a reflectively lyrical touch (best encountered on "Friends" and "In Love," both addressed to his wife), but he's not a romanticist on the order of Petrucciani. Well past his penchant for glib overplaying, this Gallic pianist lends focused warmth to the 10 originals that make up *Music*, his first recording to include electric bassists and synthesizer specialists among a corps of sidemen.

By and large, Petrucciani's songs and playing are substantial pleasures worth savoring again and again. On "Memories Of Paris," his limpid lines softly radiate nostalgia, but only of the most generous sort, and he makes the jazz waltz, "Lullaby," suggest an evening soiree in a handsome parlor overlooking the river Seine. Petrucciani lets his dominant right paw fly with a master's understated ease of control throughout the sprightly "Bite" and he serves up respectful acknowledgements to Bud Powell

and J.S. Bach on "My Bebop Tune"—the first tune in the company of electric musicians and the latter with just acoustic bassman Andy McKee and drummer Victor Jones. Afro-Trinidadian lark "O Nana Oye"—that's Tania Maria and Petrucciani singing colorful jabberwocky—induces only touristy smiles, and "Play Me" edges too close to funk claptrap. Yet, the blues "Happy Birthday Mr. K"—trio plus percussionist—has all the compelling vitality one expects and usually gets from the diminutive big man. (reviewed on CD)

—frank-john hadley



ART PEPPER

THE COMPLETE GALAXY RECORDINGS—

Galaxy GCD-1016-2: including *MISS WHO?*; *LOVER COME BACK TO ME*; *PATRICIA*; *THESE FOOLISH THINGS*; *CHRIS' BLUES*; *OVER THE RAINBOW*; *YARD-BIRD SUITE*; *I LOVE YOU*; *PEPPER POT*; *STRAIGHT, NO CHASER*; *YESTERDAYS*; *A NIGHT IN TUNISIA*; *DIANE*; *MY FRIEND JOHN*; *DUO BLUES*; *BLUES FOR BLANCHE*; *LANDSCAPE*; *DONNA LEE*; *SO IN LOVE*; *LOVER MAN*; *BODY AND SOUL*; *TRUE BLUES*; *AVALON*; *THE TRIP*; *LANDSCAPE*; *SOMETIME*; *MAMBO DE LA PINTA*; *RED CAR*; *MAMBO KOYAMA*; *STRAIGHT LIFE*; *BESAME MUCHO*; *THE SHADOW OF YOUR SMILE*; *BUT BEAUTIFUL*; *WHEN YOU'RE SMILING*; *SURF RIDE*; *NATURE BOY*; *SEPTEMBER SONG*; *MAKE A LIST*; *LONG AGO AND FAR AWAY*; *OUR SONG*; *HERE'S THAT RAINY DAY*; *THAT'S LOVE*; *WINTER MOON*; *WHEN THE SUN COMES OUT*; *BLUES IN THE NIGHT*; *THE PRISONER*; *OL' MAN RIVER*; *MR. BIG FALLS HIS J.G. HAND*; *CLOSE TO YOU ALONE*; *THERE WILL NEVER BE ANOTHER YOU*; *MELOLEV*; *GOODBYE, AGAIN*; *BRAZIL*; *WHAT'S NEW*; *LANDSCAPE*; *VALSE TRISTE*; *THANK YOU BLUES*; *ROAD WALTZ*; *FOR FREDDIE*; *ROADGAME*; *EVERYTHING HAPPENS TO ME*; *ALLEN'S ALLEY (WEE)*; *SAMBA MOM MOM*; *ARTHUR'S BLUES*; *TETE-A-TETE*; *THE WAY YOU LOOK TONIGHT*; *'ROUND MIDNIGHT*; *A NIGHT IN TUNISIA*; *LAST THING BLUES*; *GOIN' HOME*; *DON'T LET THE SUN CATCH YOU CRYIN'*; *ISN'T SHE LOVELY*; *BILLIE'S BOUNCE*.

Personnel: Pepper, alto saxophone, clarinet; Stanley Cowell (cuts 1-12,70-90), Hank Jones (13-20), George Cables (21-60,91-136), Tommy Flanagan (63-69), piano; Cecil McBee (1-12,70-90), Ron Carter (13-20), Charlie Haden (21-38), Tony Dumas (39-60), Red Mitchell (63-69), David Williams (92-112), bass; Roy Haynes (1-12), Al Foster (13-20), Billy Higgins (21-60,63-69), Carl Burnett (70-112), drums; Kenneth Nash, percussion (2,6,7); Howard Roberts, guitar (70-83,88); string section (70-82).

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

In trying to describe the music of Art Pepper, it's easy to lapse into cliché: the tortured artist, exorcising his private demons, struggles to

articulate his anger, frustration, exhilaration, exposing his shattered nerves and fragile vulnerability in the process. The problem is, in this case, it's all true and to the point. The evidence is here, in this exhaustive collection of the altoist's final recordings as a leader, 1978-'82.

Pepper's art was fueled by conflict; his obsessively competitive nature required that he constantly prove himself—to his audience, to his collaborating musicians, to himself. And in few other musicians has the interior collision between aesthetic/musical values and pure expression been so audible, so gripping, and so rewarding. As a technician, Pepper's facility was such that he could play scorching pop-flavored licks in his sleep—or on the nod—and yet, his painfully honest character wouldn't allow himself to coast. In the nearly 19 hours of music spread over these 16 CDs there's never a sense of patterned playing or rote note-spinning. An especially elastic feel for phrasing meant he could stretch his material to the absolute breaking point, but it seldom snapped. The passion in his playing stemmed from an innately lyrical conception, and his ease of execution sometimes masked the searching, yearning quality which drove the music into such emotionally-uplifting states. His was a continual quest for ecstasy, a quest which rejected artifice and recognized that beauty is often blemished and sometimes grows out of aggression; only when that aggression became uncontrollable vehemence—when he tried to wring more out of his material than it could bear—did the music become unnerving, hard to hear.

The tension between structure (intellect) and expression (emotion) inspired Pepper at his best—his most intense—to ravenously devour chord changes. This is one reason why the redundancy of repertory on many of the tunes here (numerous versions in various live and studio settings) is not an issue. I'd hate, for example, to be without any of the five versions of "Landscape," which grow increasingly hallucinogenic. Pepper's ballads are breathtaking—sustained melodic invention, guileless twists and turns, and a wounded, wary edge. In his timbral effects—shrieks, nontempered flurries, and bent notes—and Collrane-ish fractured arpeggiations you can hear a lot of where David Sanborn is coming from today.

Through sheer strength of purpose, Pepper commands our primary attention. His rhythm sections prod and push, but stay basically unobtrusive. Over his long tenure, George Cables became a distinctive voice alongside the demanding altoist, and shines on the concluding duo dates. The underrated Stanley Cowell is crisp and capable, and Tommy Flanagan is predictably exquisite in his too-brief stay ("Nature Boy," from his short session, is a masterpiece).

The packaging is up to Fantasy's standard. Who will buy this expensive box? Well, I suspect Pepper fanatics (I'm one) will of course leap at the opportunity to replace their LPs with remixed, high quality CDs—and in the bargain obtain 63 performances never before released in the U.S. Other, more penurious, listeners may be content to wait for favorite sessions to be issued individually. But among the advantages of confronting such a wealth of material in bulk is that we are able to view

Pepper's lifework as a continuum—interrupted at times, but evolving, inexorably. This final chapter documents the greatest changes, reveals the greatest risks, and answers why music was as addictive to Art Pepper as other, more destructive, substances. (reviewed on CD)
—art lange



MILES DAVIS

ASCENSEUR POUR L'ECHAFAUD (LIFT TO THE SCAFFOLD)—Fontana 836-305-2: NUIT SUR LES CHAMPS-ELYSEES (4 TAKES); ASSASSINAT (3); MOTEL; FINAL (3); ASCENSEUR; LE PETIT BAL (2); SEQUENCE VOITURE (2); GENERIQUE; L'ASSASSINAT DE CARALA; SUR L'AUTOROUTE; JULIEN DANS L'ASCENSEUR; FLORENCE SUR LES CHAMPS-ELYSEES; DINER AU MOTEL; EVASION DE JULIEN; VISITE DU VIGILE; AU BAR DU PETIT BAC; CHEZ LE PHOTOGRAPHE DU MOTEL. (74:20 minutes)

Personnel: Davis, trumpet; Barney Wilen, tenor saxophone; Rene Urtreger, piano; Pierre Michelot, bass; Kenny Clarke, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

AURA—Columbia C2X 45332: INTRO; WHITE; YELLOW; ORANGE; RED; GREEN; BLUE; ELECTRIC RED; INDIGO; VIOLET. (66:00)

Personnel: Davis, trumpet; 30-piece augmented "big band" directed by Palle Mikkelborg (trumpet, composer, producer). Soloists: John McLaughlin, guitar (cuts 2,4,10); Niels-Henning Ørsted Pedersen, bass (6,9); Bo Steif, fretless bass (6); Thomas Clausen, piano (9).

★ ★ 1/2

Miles hits Paris, 1957. Reminds me of the bridge of "Love For Sale": "Love that's fresh and still unspoiled/Love that's only slightly soiled." Miles here is like Jeanne Moreau's screen persona: petulant, alluring, tainted, unattainable. This soundtrack to *Ascenseur* was a happy accident: no plans, uninhibited, fresh, chancy. Perfect: the French formula for cinematic success. I never did get to see the movie, but the music—released in part on Columbia as *Jazz Track* around 1960 and long out of print—burns with the dark thrills of the perfect crime gone awry. Leave it to the French to come up with *film blanche*!

And here's Miles, in the white heat of it with his Harmon mute poised like a stiletto. He has expatriate brushmaster Kenny Clarke and three hip, dangerous Frenchmen as accomplices: snub-nosed Michelot, sidewinder Wilen, professor Urtreger. Things move circuitously, with perspicacious cool, but occasionally all hell (Sartre's chill variety) breaks loose. Okay, they could have edited the tape; but Columbia's 26-minute version was a

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Recorded live August 31, 1979 at
Jazz Festival Willisau/Switzerland

The sensitivity and concern with which these two approach this meeting is manifested in the music's subtlest elements ("God lives in the details," as Mies van der Rohe reminded us). From the opening moments, where Max sculpts dramatic and delicate gong and cymbal shapes in the air in support of the pastoral melodicism of Anthony's soprano sax, to the spy soprano and drum duet dance at the close, the music is full of marvelous episodes and minute particulars - none of which can be divorced from the flow of the whole. Braxton has told me of his sense of total communication between them, and how he "never felt a moment of separation". This, too, is everywhere audible - the intensity, and cohesion, and tension, demands sustained attention throughout.

And the rewards are great. To recognize the humor (the fragility of Roach's chimes against Braxton's gruff contra-bass-clarinet), the adaptiveness (after the initial alto explosion, with Max on traps, hear how Braxton insinuates his soprano into the drummer's torrid phrasing), the formality (a particularly architectonic alto solo - the second - off of a self-generated three-note cell while tom-toms thunder), expertise (Roach keeping an intricate and regular bass drum pattern while forging deft counter-rhythms with his hands), simplicity (Max's barest backbeat which, in its dynamically effective lack of extravagance, inspires Braxton's expressive blues playing... including the traditional tag!) - to recognize these characteristics while maintaining contact with the ritual importance of the total experience is to share the moment of creation, and its meaningfulness, with the musicians. It's a rare opportunity. But it's here.

- Art Lange

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little too tidy. And for all its flaws and stretchers, cuts and repeats, this is a period classic, like a '58 Impala. It's smoky, sexy. Great black-and-white backdrop for intimate *tete-a-tetes*.

Aura captures for a moment flashes of that evanescent yet abiding musical nature that is Miles Davis. However maddening and elusive the man, his music is right there—tactile, electrifying, broody, driven—as it nearly always has been. Miles, still going like 60 at 63, doesn't have to play a lot; when he lays it, it stays laid. But his aura is fuzzy on this big date. He doesn't sound completely in it. Arch and echoey on the contempo-vamped "Orange." Quizzical and fretful on the final half of "Violet."

Danish musician Palle Mikkelborg arranged a date for Dexter Gordon (Steeplechase, 1976) that played off Dex's warmth and came out purring positive. Here Mikkelborg's Nordic cool and Miles own interior chill cancel each other out; the date's on ice. The charts hang in mid-air, irresolute and static. The color-coding doesn't wash: I hear gray, beige, and lavender. Miles feints and prances, but never gets a toe-hold. Spots for the composer's ex-bandmates Clausen and NHOP only distract, though McLaughlin lends his spark, a voice untamed. If Gil Evans had lived a little longer, Miles and he might have made that reunion session (they debuted together for Columbia with *Porgy And Bess* in 1959); the rest of us have to live with that. (reviewed on CD) —*fred bouchard*



Laurie Anderson

STRANGE ANGELS—Warner Bros. 25900-1: *STRANGE ANGELS; MONKEY'S PAW; COOLSVILLE; RAMON; BABYDOLL; BEAUTIFUL RED DRESS; THE DAY THE DEVIL; THE DREAM BEFORE; MY EYES; HIAWATHA.*

Personnel: Anderson, vocals, keyboards, percussion, programming; various others.

★ ★

Laurie Anderson has become probably the best-known of the '70s New York vanguard that included musical folks like Steve Reich and Philip Glass as well as artists and writers. Since her 1980 hit "O Superman," her performance-art has generally fused storytelling from an offbeat perspective with often spare, if high-tech, pop-derived music; Anderson talked her way through sometimes political, sometimes personal narratives that took their metaphors and positions just seriously enough to be able to laugh at them periodically.

Strange Angels could be subtitled "Laurie Anderson Sings," since she's abandoned her talkin'-blues voiceovers for an unfortunately unpleasant and constricted singing style. It could also be called "Collected Laurie Ander-

son Tics." Her pop-song formats have become as predictably formulaic in their own way as Jethro Tull's or Madonna's: a list of guest stars, electronic squiggles, a smidgen of politics, a weird or arresting metaphor taken to its logical conclusion ("I'd rewrite the book of love/I'd make it funny"). Clever, literate, witty—at times.

Mostly, though, *Strange Angels* is kinda hokey, pretty boring, and sometimes excruciatingly whimsical. As in real cute juxtapositions of ideas and themes that are, uh, supposed to make you think, I guess. "Give me back my innocence/Get me a brand new suit," for instance. Heavy. "Geronimo and little Nancy/Marilyn and John F. dancing/Uncle took the message and it's written on the wall." Nothing like a list of clichéd lost icons for a retro-projected age of innocence—ah, Camelot! Too bad she got the Chuck Berry quote wrong.

There are flashes of quality here—the underlying feminism of "Beautiful Red Dress," the Afro-pop rhythms of "Monkey's Paw," an occasional line like "History is an angel being blown backwards into the future." But they're only flashes. It seems like Anderson has become trapped by her own success, frozen into her own small set of voices and viewpoints. She's ready to settle for what she already knows. For me, that's not enough. (reviewed on LP) —*gene santoro*



THELONIOUS MONK

GENIUS OF MODERN MUSIC, VOLUME 1—Blue Note 81510 2: *HUMPH; EVONCE (2 TAKES); SUBURBAN EYES (2 TAKES); THELONIOUS; NICE WORK IF YOU CAN GET IT (2 TAKES); RUBY, MY DEAR (2 TAKES); WELL, YOU NEEDN'T (2 TAKES); APRIL IN PARIS (2 TAKES); OFF MINOR; INTROSPECTION; IN WALKED BUD; MONK'S MOOD; WHO KNOWS (2 TAKES); 'ROUND MIDNIGHT.* (63:14 minutes)

Personnel: Monk, piano; Art Blakey, drums, with: (cuts 1-6) Idrees Sulieman, trumpet; Danny Quebec West, alto saxophone; Gene Ramey, bass; (7-16) Romey, bass; (17-21) George Taitt, trumpet; Sahib Shihab, alto saxophone; Bob Paige, bass.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

GENIUS OF MODERN MUSIC, VOLUME 2—Blue Note 81511 2: *FOUR IN ONE (2 TAKES); CRISS CROSS (2 TAKES); ERONEL; STRAIGHT, NO CHASER; ASK ME NOW (2 TAKES); WILLOW WEEP FOR ME; SKIPPY (2 TAKES); HORNIN' IN (2 TAKES); SIXTEEN (2 TAKES); CAROLINA MOON; LET'S COOL ONE; I'LL FOLLOW YOU.* (60:33)

Personnel: Monk, piano, with: (cuts 1-9) Al McKibbon, bass; Art Blakey, drums; (1-6,9) Sahib Shihab, alto saxophone; Milt Jackson, vibes; (10-18) Nelson Boyd, bass; Max Roach,

drums; (10-17) Kenny Dorham, trumpet; Lou Donaldson, alto saxophone; Lucky Thompson, tenor saxophone.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

STRAIGHT NO CHASER—Columbia 45358: *STRAIGHT, NO CHASER (AND OPENING NARRATION); PANNONICA; TRINKLE, TINKLE; UGLY BEAUTY/REHEARSAL; UGLY BEAUTY; EPISTROPHY; EVIDENCE; I MEAN YOU (STICKBALL)/REHEARSAL AND PERFORMANCE; LULU'S BACK IN TOWN; DON'T BLAME ME; SWEETHEART OF ALL MY DREAMS; 'ROUND MIDNIGHT.* (53:38)

Personnel: Monk, piano, with: (cuts 1,4,6-8,12) Charlie Rouse, tenor saxophone; Larry Gales, bass; Ben Riley, drums; (3) John Coltrane, tenor saxophone; Wilbur Ware, bass; Shadow Wilson, drums; (6-8) Roy Copeland, trumpet; Jimmy Cleveland, trombone; Phil Woods, alto saxophone; Johnny Griffin, tenor saxophone.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

It's no secret that major-label CD reissues often leave much to be desired. But not always. Blue Note's new Monk CDs aren't perfect, but they're getting there. The titles and covers are taken from the label's first (incomplete, out of order) Monk LP collections, but these discs are closer in spirit to Mosaic's exhaustive *Complete Blue Note Recordings Of Thelonious Monk*—like that four-LP box, these two CDs place the extant recordings (including alternates) in chronological order. There are 39 tracks—seven more than on Blue Note's last Monk set, a 1976 twofer. (Ira Gitler's good notes have been recycled from that issue, with minor revision.) True, the Mosaic box includes 10 more tracks from two sessions: 7/2/48 and 4/14/57, the latter a Rollins date with Monk. Were we quibbling, we'd point out that some of those cuts could have been squeezed on here.

Surely you know these 1947-'52 recordings are among the classics of the music, Monk's first and freshest sides as leader. But everyone knows Monk now—he's a household name. One reason is Charlotte Zwerin's superb film *Straight, No Chaser*. Monk's best producer, Orrin Keepnews, has assembled the soundtrack album as an "adaptation" of the documentary—including snippets of voices (Monk's, Charlie Rouse's, patron Nica's) that sometimes get in the way: souvenir voiceovers obscure a new-to-record "'Round Midnight" fragment from the Vanguard, 1968.

Happily, most of the music is previously unreleased stuff, drawn from the film or the sources that spawned it. There are four piano solos: two home-recorded in 1956 ("Pannonica," "Lulu"); "Don't Blame Me" from Atlanta, 1967; "Sweetheart Of All My Dreams" from that Vanguard date. And there are three (CD) or two (LP) tracks by the otherwise-unrecorded 1967 octet whose performances are a film highlight, and a partial rehearsal take of "Ugly Beauty," from 1967's *Underground* session. (As the movie shows, Teo Macero didn't tape it, much to Monk's disgust; the take comes from the documentary footage.) The music's fine even if the filmstock sound isn't. SNC's coproducer Bruce Ricker says his best "guess-estimate" is that 90 percent of the complete takes found in the 14 hours of 1967-'68 footage that made the film possible are on screen or on the soundtrack. Much of the music in the film was shot/recorded in incomplete snippets;

Keepnews has edited the version of "I Mean You" here from heads recorded in rehearsal (sans piano) and a concert Monk solo. The splices are obvious but the music lives.

The one major find from the octet tour not in the film or on the album is "Blue Monk," a feature for Clark Terry, who'd guested on that one tune. I wish Orrin had included that in place of one of the better-known performances here—the Riverside "Trinkle, Tinkle" with Coltrane is classic, but already widely available. Quibble, quibble. The unreleased treasures here make this a must for Monkophiles. (reviewed on CD) —*kevin whitehead*



STEVE TIBBETTS

BIG MAP IDEA—ECM 839 253-2: *BLACK MOUNTAIN SIDE; BLACK YEAR; BIG IDEA; WISH; STATION; START; MILE 234; 100 MOONS; WAIT/3 LETTERS: PART 1; PART 2; PART 3.* (52:52 minutes)
Personnel: Tibbetts, guitars, dobro, kalimba, pianolin, tapes; Marc Anderson, congas, steel drums, percussion, berimbau; Marcus Wise, tabla; Michelle Kinney, cello.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

One of the first things I noticed about this music was the absence of that "ECM sound" that many of us have come to know. Maybe it has something to do with the fact that it was recorded in Minnesota instead of Norway. Replacing the typically spacious, "empty hall" sound is a more intimate, textured one. Good thing, for amidst all the twanging, tablas, and tapping there exists a genuine sense of artistry here, one better suited to warmer environs: cosmic guitar meanderings vaguely reminiscent of John Fahey (folk-combining-New Age sensibilities) and sonics approaching Ralph Towner and Bill Connors; even a redone "rocker" (with tablas on both versions) from Led Zeppelin's Jimmy Page. Less dramatic than the '88 reissue, *Yr*, Tibbetts takes a more soothing, delicate route on *Big Map Idea*.

This isn't trendy fusion music, slapping together worldly instruments in an attempt to sound cultured or "contemporary." Rather, the tunes—all but one either written or co-written by Tibbetts—weave a seemingly seamless tapestry from beginning to end, providing various settings for his almost classical-sounding guitars, etc. This set lacks the fierce wailing of a more robust Tibbetts. In its place, we hear original sounds produced from the elements of World Music, intelligent sounds that caress the ear and stir the imagination.

This is dream music. But don't let that lull you into a false sense of repose; the distinc-

tions from track to track may be subtle, but well worth your concentrated effort. Selective use of percussion—with tasteful, longtime collaborator Marc Anderson providing most of the punch—gives this music bite and some delightful punctuations. Electronics play a limited role here. As Tibbetts states, "Sounds in general are my biggest influence"; so the electronically reproduced sounds of, for example, the actual singing of children in "3 Letters" play a part in the overall cinematic soundscape we hear—not the muddied synthesizer filler found on lesser albums with similar designs.

The melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic constructions don't appear to be too adventurous. But when all the parts are assembled, the strengths of this music lie not in any attempts to be assertive or "in your face"; rather, Tibbetts' tasteful, economical, and intelligent orchestration, the internal logic and consistency, and *BMI's* ability to draw attention to itself through the deft means of subtlety and the telling of a story, perhaps one's own story—these are the qualities that give it muscle and staying power. Engaging, this music affirms even as it delights. (reviewed on CD) —*john ephland*

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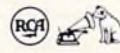
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JOE STRUMMER

EARTHQUAKE WEATHER—Epic EK 45372: GANGSTERVILLE; KING OF THE BAYOU; ISLAND HOPPING; SLANT SIX; DIZZY'S GOATEE; SHOUTING STREET; BOOGIE WITH YOUR CHILDREN; LEOPARDSKIN LIMOUSINES; SIKORSKY PARTS; JEWELLERS & BUMS; HIGHWAY ONE ZERO STREET; RIDE YOUR DONKEY; PASSPORT TO DETROIT; SLEEPWALK. (45:21 minutes)

Personnel: Strummer, vocals, rhythm guitar, piano; Zander Schloss, lead guitar, banjo, veloh, Spanish guitar, organ, vocals; Lonnie Marshall, bass guitar, piano, high vocals; Willie MacNeil, drums (cuts 2,3,5,7,8,11,13,14); Jack Irons, drums (1,4,6,9,10,12).

★ ★ ★ ★

Earthquake Weather is Joe Strummer's first album since *Cut The Crap* was released in 1985. The founder of The Clash has kept busy since then, touring with The Pogues, co-writing

a few songs with former Clash member Mick Jones (who now heads up Big Audio Dynamite), performing in Alex Cox's film *Straight To Hell*, and working in the now-completed Jim Jarmusch film *Mystery Train*.

With *Earthquake Weather*, Strummer delivers an interesting and mostly pleasing mix of punk, funk, reggae, and soul sounds, beginning with "Gangsterville," a punk-rocking anthem of late 1980s angst in which Strummer tells us who is really in charge, since most of us are unwilling to make the hard choices that influence our daily lives: "Final decisions are made by the club/And implemented by the shadow of a glove." Strummer's passionate vocals and violent chord changes are joined by the crafty electric guitar riffs of Zander Schloss for a combined effect not unlike a live high-voltage line jumping around during a severe thunderstorm.

The lighthearted "Island Hopping" relieves the punk tension of the opening cuts and sets the stage for the excursions that follow: the jazzy "Dizzy's Goatee" (which celebrates the spirit of Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker); the happy, all-out rocker, "Shouting Street"; the funky "Boogie With Your Children" and "Sikorsky Parts"; the talking blues of "Leopardskin Limousines"; and the rolling reggae tune, "Ride Your Donkey."

The most pleasant surprise on this album is the guitar playing of Schloss. Schloss demonstrates his flexibility by switching styles from song to song and reacting to Strummer's vocals

with arrangements that strengthen the mood of each song. Accentuating Strummer's vocals is no doubt challenging; a marathon runner/ participant, Strummer infuses his music with a very physical element, frequently sounding like he is out of breath and running for his life—or pleading desperately for someone to listen and act to change the injustice in our society. At any rate, Schloss knocks off some crisp and complex arrangements that are very effective catalysts, particularly on "Passage To Detroit" and the soulful final cut, "Sleepwalk." The bass and drum playing are also solid, and Lonnie Marshall belts out wonderful, high vocals on "Boogie With Your Children."

Hard-core Strummer fans are sure to be happy with the punk and garage rockers that are sprinkled across the album, and the undecideds and curious will find a balance and proportion in the mix of songs here not found on Strummer's previous album. Strummer now has a band that can complement his songwriting as well as push the energy up a few levels. (reviewed on CD) —*tim johnson*



DIZZY GILLESPIE

THE SYMPHONY SESSIONS—ProJazz CDJ 698: MANTECA; CON ALMA; LORRAINE; BROTHER K; TIN TIN DEO; FIESTA MOJO; A NIGHT IN TUNISIA. (49:44 minutes)

Personnel: Gillespie, trumpet; Ron Holloway, tenor saxophone; Ed Cherry, guitar; John Lee, bass; Ignacio Berroa, drums; Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra; John Dankworth, conductor.

★ ★ ★ 1/2

Orchestral possibilities have always seemed inherent in Gillespie's compositions, possibly because of the independent strength yet interdependence of bass line, melody, harmony, and rhythm. The symphonic setting gives us the colors of strings, french horns, woodwinds, and percussion plus the usual big band brass. The quintet is integrated into and juxtaposed against these, concerto grosso-style.

The tone of these performances is mellow and lyrical as opposed to fiery. Latter-day Gillespie is melodic and glowing, a fluent groove having largely replaced the urgent trumpet sound of the early days. By these revised standards, he is in good form throughout the album.

The quintet suits his moods. Cherry's tone, enhanced but not distorted by electronics, blends well with the orchestra's strings and the cooler sound of Gillespie's trumpet. There's an easygoing flow to the rhythms of Lee and Berroa, reminding us of Gillespie's integration

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of Afro-Cuban rhythms and jazz in the '40s and Brazilian rhythms and jazz in the '60s. Holloway, the newest member of the group, is a big-toned, soulful tenor man, whose solos on "Lorraine," "Fiesta Mojo," and "A Night In Tunisia" are the hottest items on the album.

The arrangements range from frameworks (orchestral intro and ending, quintet jazz in the middle) to fully meshed scores. Robert Farnon's arrangement of "Con Alma" is the prettiest and most fully blended. J.J. Johnson scored "A Night In Tunisia" (with fanfare brass and tympani in the beginning), and Frank Foster scored "Tin Tin Deo." Mike Crotty arranged the others. There are reminders throughout of previous—and, as of yet, unreissued—orchestral or big band albums featuring Gillespie: *Perceptions*, *Gillespiana*, *The New Continent*, and *Carnegie Hall Concert*.

This album doesn't improve on those, but it is a fitting tribute to Gillespie the bebop pioneer in a more melodic stage of his career. And it is a reminder of his innovations in rhythm and the beauty of his compositions. (reviewed on CD)

—owen cordle



JEFF BECK

GUITAR SHOP—Epic OE 44313: *GUITAR SHOP*; *SAVOY*; *BEHIND THE VEIL*; *BIG BLOCK*; *WHERE WERE YOU*; *STAND ON IT*; *DAY IN THE HOUSE*; *TWO RIVERS*; *SLING SHOT*.

Personnel: Beck, guitars; Terry Bozzio, drums and percussion; Tony Hymas, keyboards and synthesizers.

★ ★ ★ ★

JOE SATRIANI

FLYING IN A BLUE DREAM—Relativity 88561-1015-2: *FLYING IN A BLUE DREAM*; *THE MYSTICAL POTATO HEAD GROOVE THING*; *CAN'T SLOW DOWN*; *HEADLESS*; *STRANGE*; *I BELIEVE*; *ONE BIG RUSH*; *BIG BAD MOON*; *THE FEELING*; *THE PHONE CALL*; *DAY AT THE BEACH*; *BACK TO SHALLA-BAL*; *RIDE*; *THE FORGOTTEN (Pts. I & II)*; *THE BELLS OF LAL (Pts. I & II)*; *INTO THE LIGHT*. (64:58 minutes)

Personnel: Satriani, guitars, bass, keyboard, harmonica (cuts 4,8,13), vocals (3,5,6,8,10,13), extra percussion; Simon Phillips, drums (6); Stu Hamm, bass (5,17); Bongo Bob Smith, electric drums and percussion (5,12,13); John Cuniberti, sitar and percussion; John Campitelli, drums and percussion.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

Late '60s guitar hero Jeff Beck pioneered his use of tones and attacks with The Yardbirds, coming up with such gems as the Middle-Eastern approach on "Over Under Around And

Through" and his incorporation of country-style finger picking in "Jeff's Boogie," a basic staple of any budding guitar hero.

Late '80s guitar hero Joe Satriani pioneered some ground of his own on his 1988 smash, *Surfing With The Alien*, the first rock instrumental to chart high since Beck's 1976 opus, *Blow By Blow*. Now on their recent releases, both guitar heroes show that they still have a few surprises up their sleeve.

Beck's latest, the trio album *Guitar Shop*, featuring former Zappa drummer Terry Bozzio and keyboardist Tony Hymas, is far more satisfying than his last effort (the over-produced, overly slick *Flash*, from 1985). On the title cut he flaunts his ongoing ties to the Chess-era blues masters, updating those Delta-influenced licks with some nasty new tones. The taped voice-over rap here, a laundry list of Beck's tools, should score novelty points with guitar fanatics.

Overall, Beck's attention to nuance and phrasing, his control of tones and whammy bar techniques, and his clever use of dynamics have always placed him a notch above the surface speedsters. He has a thorough knowledge and understanding of both the blues and country music, and those impulses often work their way into the fabric of a tune, as on the odd reggae of "Behind The Veil" (which sounds like Bob Marley meets Duane Eddy and Muddy Waters) and on "Big Block" (which chugs along like a Beck take on Joe Walsh's "Rocky Mountain Way"). His sheer mastery of

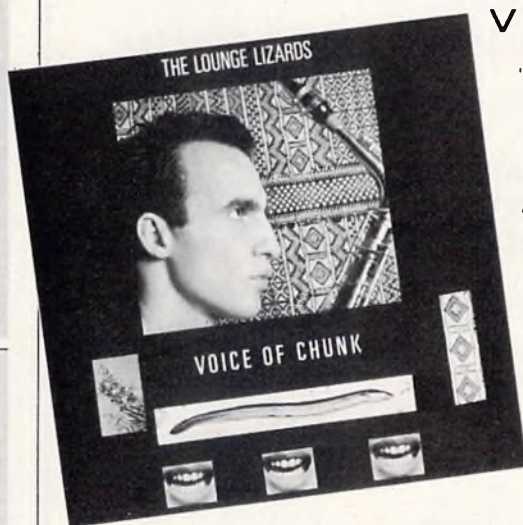
tones comes across on the wailing "Savoy" and on his anthemic concert-opener, "Stand On It."

And as if to throw down the gauntlet to a new generation of burners, he trots out the urgent speed-rocker, "Sling Shot," just to show that the ol' man can still kick it.

Satriani continues to flash the same mind-boggling licks that gained him so much notoriety two years ago. On his eagerly-anticipated followup, he pulls off a few surprises with a credible Little Walter-styled raunchy blues harp ("Headless," the ZZ Top-flavored "Big Bad Moon," and the raunchy rocker, "Ride") and some fairly decent vocals on six tracks.

His phrasing, control of tones, and mastery of arpeggios are showcased on "The Mystical Potato Head Groove Thing," an awesome display of technique, while his sense of humor is best captured on the bluesy lament, "The Phone Call," sung through a lo-fi telephone mic (reminiscent of Dave Edmunds' same trick on "I Hear You Knocking"). Satriani also continues to trot out the virtuosic turns on solo, unaccompanied guitar, two-hand-tapping his way (à la Stanley Jordan) through "A Day At The Beach" and "The Forgotten." And he flaunts his mastery of legato single-note playing on two instrumentals, "One Big Rush" and "Back To Shalla-Bal." Further surprises come on the ominous, Prince-ly funk of "Strange," Satriani's nod to the street, and on the emotionally-charged "I Believe," a sparse ballad that lays his voice out naked, like an intimate Suzanne Vega

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confessional. And just for kicks, there's a six-string banjo solo on "The Feeling."

But Satriani fans don't buy his albums by the ton to hear him sing or play harmonica or banjo. They are drawn to his mind-boggling technique and killing tones along with his haunting melodies and vocal phrasing. There's all that and more on *Flying In A Blue Dream*, Satriani's *Electric Ladyland*. (reviewed on LP and CD, respectively) —*bill milkowski*



ANDREW HILL

ETERNAL SPIRIT—Blue Note 92051: PINNACLE; GOLDEN SUNSET; SAMBA RASTA; TAIL FEATHER; SPIRITUAL LOVER; BOBBY'S TUNE; CD-only alternate

takes: PINNACLE; GOLDEN SUNSET; SPIRITUAL LOVER. (67:42 minutes)

Personnel: Hill, piano; Greg Osby, alto saxophone; Bobby Hutcherson, vibes; Rufus Reid, bass; Ben Riley, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

The great Andrew Hill is a changeling. His 1979-'80 solo recitals for Artists House and Soul Note were absolutely individual—amazingly spare, fragmented but flowing—while his brilliant 1987 quartet/trio release *Shades* (Soul Note) laid bare Monk's influence on his writing and small-group conception. Hill made his reputation at Blue Note in the exploratory '60s; his return to the label revisits the exploded hard-bop he specialized in back then, when Hutcherson was a frequent collaborator—although, as is often noted, Bobby plays more conservatively now than in his groundbreaking dissonant days.

Rhythmmakers Reid and Riley are old colleagues, too, from *Shades*. The fresh voice is altoist Greg Osby, whose slinky, astringent tone contrasts effectively with the watery transparency Hutcherson now favors. And Hill's open compositions liberate Osby from the M-BASE funk straitjacket that so restricts his phrasing on his own gigs. Hear, for example, the leisurely "Golden Sunset," anchored by a recurring, tolling melodic kernel the players keep bouncing off; Osby's slippery lines are inventively

flexible, a match for his sophisticated harmonic sense. (But Greg, it's time to retire that ziggurat "Rhapsody In Blue" lick you've already used on record with DeJohnette and Oliver Lake, and who knows how often live.)

"Sunset" isn't the only mesmerizing melody; "Bobby's Tune" similarly capitalizes on a haunting melodic figure. "Samba Rasta" is loping reggae, a reminder that jazz musicians have finally begun to swing rasta rhythm, much the way their forebears gradually conquered the waltz. That number, and the straightforwardly swinging blues "Tail Feather," illustrate Hill the pianist's ability to successfully swim against the rhythmic current. It's a lesson obviously learned from Monk, but Andrew doesn't cop his licks. On "Rasta," his solo is so pared-back, it seems to move in slow motion; toward the end of his statement, he tosses in a dramatic gesture—three ascending notes, voiced in lush octaves—that carries amazing impact, considering how brief and simple it all is. But then Hill has always thrived on unpredictable contrasts. *Eternal Spirit* doesn't hit the peaks of *Shades*, but Hill never rests, not even on success. He keeps us guessing where he'll go next. (reviewed on CD) —*kevin whitehead*

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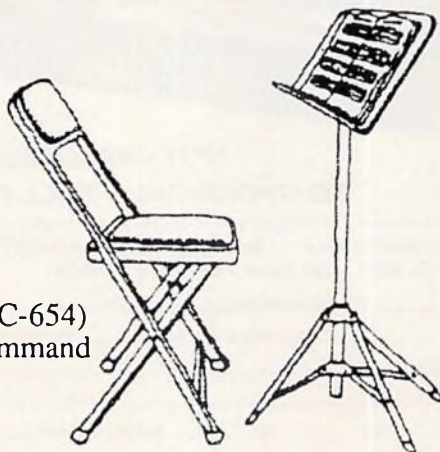
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Principle personnel: DeParis Brothers Orchestra; Albert Ammons Rhythm Kings; Eddie Heywood; Hot Lips Page and His Orchestra; Big Sid Catlett Quartet (with Ben Webster); Billie Holiday; Kansas City Six with Lester Young; George Zack; Muggsy Spanier and His Ragtimers; Joe Bushkin; Miff Mole and His Nicksie-land Band; Edmond Hall Quartet with Teddy Wilson; Max Kaminsky; Bobby Hackett; George Wettling and His Rhythm Kings; Pee Wee Russell's Hot Four; Red McKenzie; Jess Stacy; Jack Teagarden and His Swingin' Gates; Wild Bill Davison and His Commodores.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Here are some vital statistics on The Complete Commodore Jazz Recordings, Volume 2: It includes 23 LPs, weights 9 lbs./2 oz., costs \$207.00, plus \$7.00 shipping, and may be ordered on Visa or MasterCard by calling 203-327-7111. It covers 37 sessions from March 1944 through April 1945. Of the 338 cuts, all

CONTINUED ON PAGE 40

PRIMITIVE POSTMODERNISM

by Jon Andrews

Thirty-some years ago, **Gil Mellé** championed what he called primitive modern jazz, a wedding of simple, primitive rhythms and complex melodies and harmonies. Mellé, then a baritone saxophonist, claimed Bartok, Varese, and George Russell as influences and advocated the integration of modern classical music into jazz. His musical primitivism was concentrated in percussion—drums, lead pipes, whatever made a good primal thump.

As a graphic artist, Mellé's evocation of the "primitive" modern art of Picasso and Rousseau was hardly coincidental. As a movement, primitive modern jazz failed to catch fire. Over the years, Mellé concentrated on art and film work, surfacing only briefly to explore early applications of synthesizers to jazz. With *Mindscape* (Blue Note CDP 7 92168; 54:49 minutes: ★ ★ ★), Mellé returns to a world of postmodernism—rampant cross-breeding of percussion with electronics; jazz with classical; the Third World with the avant garde. I won't say that Gil Mellé *invented* postmodernism, but he may have seen it coming.

Mindscape is an all-electronic work (all-digital and all-MIDI, one suspects) with few vestiges of the "Blue Note sound." At its best ("The Blue Lion"), *Mindscape* is a dark, introspective soundtrack, sometimes propulsive, sometimes spacey. It ought to please fans of Joe Zawinul or Weather Report, as sampled reed melodies snake through bluesy synth-bass lines. Mellé's primitive modern concept returns here, in the form of simple rhythms with complicated melodies. Mellé's drum patterns may be too simplistic. It's hard to program a primal thump. Digital synthesizers can have a cold, unnatural edge, and this is not warm, fuzzy music—don't expect to cozy up next to it. Like Zawinul, Mellé succumbs to the intrigue of digital sounds, sometimes risking musical non-sequiturs to please the techno-dweebs in his audience. The digital recording is high-quality and should be heard on CD.

Wally Badarou has established a fringe-pop profile, playing keyboards for Level 42 and Talking Heads, among others. Badarou's *Words Of A Mountain* (Island 7 91260-2; 46:21: ★ ★ ½) is another one-man venture into the world of digital synthesis. This is a concept album about mountains, and, predictably, it has its peaks and valleys. *Words Of A Mountain* is targeted for a new age/classical audience. Badarou's exploration of symphonic sounds and classical romanticism leads him close to the electro-kitsch domain of Isao Tomita, where orchestral favorites are souped-up for jaded audiences. Badarou blends impressionism with World Music influences in his compositions, featuring sampled tablas (on "The Feet Of Fouta").

The best tracks, like "Leaving This Place" and "Wolves In The Urals," are airy, thoughtful tone poems that draw feeling from the electronics and benefit from the clarity of the CD. Some promising pieces are spotted with hokey digital sounds. "Vesuvio Solo," for example, features that whistling Synclavier sound everyone hates.

On paper, the pairing of trumpeter **Jon Hassell** and **Farafina**, an eight-man percussion ensemble from West Africa, seems an ideal example of primitive postmodernism. Hassell's interest in World and electronic musics dates back to the 1960s, and includes collaborations with LaMonte Young, Terry Riley, and Brian Eno. Much of his work starts from the formula of trumpet + electronics + African percussion used by Miles Davis on *Bitches Brew* and *Get Up With It*.

Flash Of The Spirit (Capitol/Intuition CDP 7 91186 2; 52:02: ★ ★ ½) succeeds where Hassell uses Farafina to extend his customary small group format. Where the musicians connect, as on "Night Moves [Fear]" and "Dreamworld [Dance]," Hassell's electronically processed trumpet pierces a hypnotic maze of interlocking drum rhythms. (It would be unfair to call Farafina's polyrhythms and cross-rhythms truly "primitive.") The project is frequently bogged down by curious production choices and limited melodic variation. In searching for the right balance between electronically processed trumpet, synthesizers, and percussion instruments, producers Daniel Lanois and Brian Eno opted for a compressed sound, hardening Hassell's tone and muffling the interplay between drums. The CD transfer doesn't help the sound enough.

In contrast to the albums above, **Harold Budd's** *The Serpent* (In Quicksilver)/*Abandoned Cities* (Opal/Warner Bros. 9 26025-2; 63:08: ★ ★ ★) is decidedly, determinedly low-tech. Budd is also a frequent collaborator of Eno, with avant garde credentials of his own, and this reissue of his 1981 EP and 1983 LP appears on Eno's label. Both albums were previously released by the artist with limited distribution and lousy pressings.

Serpent is similar to Budd's current work—these are delicate melancholy miniatures for rudimentary keyboards. The mood is almost excessively wistful. *Abandoned Cities* is the real discovery in this set. Eugene Bowen's dark, *dark* guitar chords and drones form a stark setting for simple, dimly glowing keyboard figures. This is a long, slow walk through the embers of Hiroshima searching for signs of life. The austerity and simplicity of *Abandoned Cities* contributes to its emotional pull. Although lacking in technical sophistication and musical complexity, these tool-shed recordings linger in the memory. The CD reissue greatly improves the contrast, clarity, and texture of the music.

Postmodernism, the art of fitting together things that don't necessarily fit, is tricky. Primitive postmodernism is even trickier because it requires simplicity and complexity in equal measure, all at once. **db**

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COMIN' ON—hat ART CD 6016; *COMIN' ON*; *ODE TO THE FLOWER MAIDEN*; *ENCOUNTER*; *SUNDAY AFTERNOON JAZZ SOCIETY BLUES*; *ROOM 408*. (74:57 minutes)

Personnel: Bradford, cornet; Carter, clarinet; Don Preston, piano, synthesizer; Richard Davis, bass (cuts 1, 3-5); Andrew Cyrille, drums (1, 3-5).

★ ★ ★ ½

Bradford and Carter have collaborated for decades, but this 1988 live date is their first co-led combo recording since 1972. Starting in 1969, they recorded two for Bob Thiele's Flying Dutchman label—which beg reissue under Thiele's Portrait imprint—and two for Revelation. But their partnership hasn't gotten stale. It's gotten better.

They're a perfect match, expressive stylists who cannily exploit their axes' pitfalls: the clarinetist seasons his lines with throaty squeals; the cornetist makes pivotal use of roughhewn flurries and split-tones and wayward low notes. But they're no primitives; On Carter's "Comin' On," Bradford's fatback lyricism is built on creative paraphrases of a tuneful riff. He digs into the burnished ring of brass as deeply as Carter does into the rich sound of wood.

That's what makes their blend so profound: the physical union of wood and metal, the organism and the alloy, the natural and the manufactured. The steel-stringed bass and the drum set are made with wood and metal, too, so the blending resonates out, permeating the band's sound. Don Preston's microchip keyboards expand that sound, opening it out. (He's listed as playing piano too, but it sounds like he's playing piano on synthesizer.) This sonic chameleon's low-key ghostly harmonies add a haunting quality to Carter's "Ode," sans bass and drums—he *sours* where blander synth players sweeten.

On "Encounter," Preston buzzes like a bee striding a picnic, hisses like an angry cat, and toils like Big Ben—all in the first three minutes. (The shortest track runs almost 10, so everyone has room to stretch. But there's no filler.) The underappreciated Richard Davis' relentlessly driving ostinato keeps the intensity level high; the always splendid Cyrille (like Bradford and Preston, a vet of Carter's octet) weaves around that pile-driving bass figure with no flagging of momentum. "Encounter" is a riveting exercise in sustained intensity and tension.

Over the years, Carter and Bradford have been plagued by easy comparisons to Ornette and Don Cherry. True, there are Ornette echoes in Carter's jaunty "Sunday" and Bradford's singsong "Room 408." But this wonderful group sounds like none other, and, boy, is it good to have 'em back. (reviewed on CD)

—Kevin Whitehead

OCTOBER 1989 DOWN BEAT 37

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 38

are previously unissued takes, even on the CBS series of several years ago. There are only 2,500 sets in print. And of the 110 song titles included (not including musicians' originals), only eight were less than 10 years old when they were recorded. The median year of the Commodore repertoire in 1944-'45 was 1927.

The Commodore output of this period falls into four categories. So in order of volume:

Dixieland: Even in 1945, this remained the label's prime staple. There are 11 traditional sessions here, and you will not find better examples of this fundamental jazz formula anywhere. Only the Blue Note Ed Hall and Sidney Bechet sides (Mosaic MR6-109 and MR6-110) are comparable, and perhaps some of the Columbia Eddie Condon's of the '50s.

A dixieland group is defined not only by its '20s repertoire but by its trumpet. All of Commodore founder Mill Gabler's hornmen were melodists, and the melodies they played were simple, old fashioned, and as basically correct as a gospel hymn. Muggsy Spanier, Sidney DeParis, Bobby Hackett, Wild Bill Davison, Max Kaminsky, and Billy Butterfield are the principal trumpet players here. Pee Wee Russell is the major clarinet on most of the dixie sessions. Miff Mole's vintage tailgate trombone is part-rhythm section, part-ensemble glue. George Wettling's swing-style drumming keeps the bands on a swing-rhythm track and away from om-pah revivalism.

Piano: With eight solo or trio sessions, Gabler's penchant for piano is clear. They are mostly of the hot saloon variety. George Zack

has 53 cuts—far out of proportion to his importance, then or now. He was a good two-beat, cat-house pianist with a powerful walking left hand and a full vocabulary of licks from boogie woogie to early Hines. He was a keeper of the flame in an era of Wilsonian swing pianists, but added no special vision to the old genre. A never-issued date by Joe Bushkin and Cozy Cole is bright and crisp. Boogie woogie master Albert Ammons goes straight for the knock-out punch in his solo set but gives himself no space to build. This is the nature of the music, which is why a little boogie woogie goes a long way. The Ammons Rhythm Kings with Lips Page and Sid Catlett have more to offer. There's also a good, low-key Jess Stacy set with Specs Powell on drums.

Quartets: There are four quartet sessions here and all are superlative. Outside of some of Ben Webster's Ellington pieces, his date here with Catlett is sufficient to define his power to any first-time listener. Edmond Hall, who teams with Teddy Wilson in two sessions, remains one of the most astonishing clarinetists in jazz history. His pinched-nerve intonation was so raspy and incendiary at moderate-to-fast tempos, it created an impression of overpowering emotional energy. He seemed to be playing to the threshold of sheer control. The "Show Piece" and "Caravan" takes here are magnificent Hall specimens. Pee Wee Russell's parched but rich clarinet is also heard in an intriguing quartet date. Quirkiness is balanced by symmetry. Both Hall and Russell were dramatists who understood how to play the top and bottom registers of their instruments off against one another to great effect.

The Wild Cards: Eddie Heywood actually achieved commercial success on Commodore. His version of "Begin The Beguine," heard here in two takes, became a popular set piece that established his small-band formula of staccato ensemble-stepping stones across which his piano would tip-toe and pirouette.

Heywood also backed Billie Holiday. No longer just the vocalist, Billie Holiday's 1944 Commodores were wall-to-wall showcases of what had become a familiar, almost institutionalized singing style. The differences between the takes seem more incidental than conceptual. They are unlike in the way that a pair of signatures are unlike. Her ballads ("How Am I To Know" and "I'll Be Seeing You") are intimate cabaret soliloquies. Tempos are depressingly morose, however, until the third take of "He's Funny That Way." Clearly, her Vocalion days as a jazz singer were over; her Decca days as a pop singer were about to begin.

A Joe Bushkin sextet is very contemporary for Commodore. There's early Zoot Sims and Bill Harris, plus the "Salt Peanuts" riff (borrowed from "Little John Special") on "Pickin' At The Pic."

Perhaps the most famous of the mid-'40s Commodores was also a wild card—the Lester Young-Jo Jones-Bill Coleman-Bushkin date. Its textures are thick and heavy compared to Lester's feathery 1938 Commodores; but it still swings mightily and has been underestimated by many critics. Young sounds wonderful, and Jones drumming crackles and flows. (reviewed on LP)

—john mcdonough

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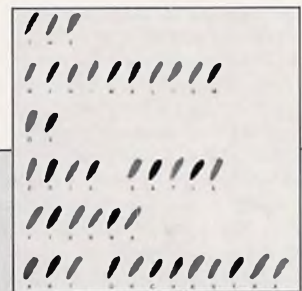
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Personnel: Matthias Ruegg, leader, conductor, arranger; Lauren Newton, vocal; Karl (Bumi) Fian, Hannes Kottek, trumpet, flugelhorn; Christian Radovan, trombone; Jon Sass, tuba; Harry Sokal, soprano, tenor saxophone, flute; Wolfgang Puschnig, alto, soprano saxophone, bass clarinet, flute; Roman Schwaller, tenor saxophone, clarinet; Woody Schabata, vibes; Wolfgang Reisinger, gonga, kalimba, tarabuka, triangle; Ima, tamboura (cut 8).

★ ★ ★ ★

BLUES FOR BRAHMS—Amadeo 839 105-2: PUNKT 1) FESTLICHE EROFFNUNG; OK—BUT WHO IS TOBER?; ALPHABET; BLUES FOR BRAHMS; BREAK FOR CONNAISSEURS; WHAT WAS THIS THING CALLED FREE-JAZZ?; INSPIRED BY J.A.; POSCHIAVO; BARS & STRIPES; BODY AND SOUL; DANKE, DAS WAR'S. (101:32)

Personnel: Matthias Ruegg, leader, conductor, arranger; Lauren Newton, vocal; Bumi Fian, Hannes Kottek, trumpet; Herbert Joos, flugelhorn; Christian Radovan, trombone; Jon Sass, tuba; Harry Sokal, soprano, tenor saxophone, flute; Co Streiff, alto saxophone, flute; Roman Schwaller, tenor saxophone; Uli Scherer, keyboards, toy piano; Heiri Kaenzig, bass, toy piano; Wolfgang Reisinger, drums, toy piano.

★ ★ ★ ½

Matthias Ruegg's Vienna Art Orchestra is a stable institution: seven of the 12 players on VAO's new *Blues For Brahms* were on the group's debut, released in '81. VAO swings, and its fine soloists get lots of leeway, but about the only stock big-band schtick Ruegg employs is the brass punch. And even the punches are distinctive, as Lauren Newton's wordless voice often spearheads the section. In the past, Ruegg has used jabbing brass as a bludgeon, but this time he uses greater restraint—even if you get your first blast 14 seconds into the opener.

Ruegg's writing is attentive to contrasts of texture and color, but he deals more in large gestures than delicate detail. (The reissued *Satie's* something of an exception.) The title "Blues"—loosely based on a Brahms song—is majestic, plaintive, and funky in quick succession. Throughout, you remember individual episodes more than whole compositions: Sass' tuba, shadowed an octave higher (harmonizer? trombone? synth?) on "OK," written by Scherer; the thorny ensemble syncopations of "Free-jazz?"; the jaunty "Danke"'s r&b/funk trimmings and simultaneous solos by Schwaller and Sokal, two of the band's best. "Body And Soul" features Fian's plunger-trumpet and Newton's stratoscat; on "Break," Newton and Streiff are backed by a gamelan of toy pianos.

Juxtaposition is a key to Ruegg's method, but his music's no post-mod scissor-job, not even where his whimsy shows. (When Newton sings/snarls her ABCs on "Alphabet," her sibilant "x" sounds x-rated.) *Blues For Brahms* is solid VAO, a good introduction for those who haven't made their acquaintance.

Less typical and better yet it is the 1983/84 tribute to the French composer (1866-1925), whose love of simple harmony and melodic repetition prefigured minimalism. Ruegg rethinks Satie's "Aubade" and "Meditation" to make the point: the former underpinned by shimmering vibes, emphasizes rhythmic crosstalk within its oompah frame—it's Reichian. On the latter, Bumi's plunger-talk over static riffing links Terry Riley and Kansas City Swing. Ruegg draws the big connections. He also exposes Satie's roots: the well-known "Gnossienne No. 1" undergoes a Weilly transformation. The little descending/ascending scalar hook is never stated; instead, Ruegg remakes it as a spry Greek dance, reminding us *gnossienne* means "Song from Knossos." The other "Gnossiennes" are more plainly reorchestrated, Newton (backed by flute or Sokal's

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slinky soprano) singing the right-hand melodies. The three "Vexations" (derived from Satie's marathon/minimal 28-hour "Pages Mystiques") are concerti for soloists, accompanied only by a chord sequence slowly tolled on Schabata's vibes. Tenorist Schwaller approaches it as a lyrical modal romp, Newton as a linguistic challenge (her chatter, here and elsewhere, sounds Dudziak-inspired); to bass clarinetist Puschnig, it's a thoughtful chalumneau maunder.

Both by renewing appreciation for a prescient composer and sidestepping all excess, *Erik Satie* may be Ruegg's finest hour. (reviewed on CD)
—kevin whitehead



**LITTLE CHARLIE AND
THE NIGHTCATS**

THE BIG BREAK—Alligator ALCD 4776: *THE BIG BREAK; DON'T DO IT; DUMP THAT CHUMP; I BEG YOUR PARDON; KANSAS CITY WOMAN; HURRY UP AND WAIT; THAT'S O.K.; JUMP START; SIDE STUFF; SOME NERVE; LOTTERY; ME AND MISS ANN.* (49:42 minutes)

Personnel: Little Charlie Baty, guitar; Rick Estrin, harmonica and vocals; Jay Peterson, bass; Dobie Strange, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

The high-profile status of such blues-based figures as Stevie Ray Vaughan and the band featuring brother Jimmy, The Fabulous Thunderbirds, has helped to validate—on a large scale—a sturdy branch of American music. But the blues and r&b strains would survive regardless of the gig prospects, whether in tiny soulful dives in any major city or on MTV.

Little Charlie and The Nightcats is a prime example of a band driven by a significant American musical heritage—in their case, Chicago blues, jump tunes, proto-rock & roll, and splashes of Western swing. Equally, though, the Nightcats are driven by the urge to make a funky noise. *The Big Break* is an unadulterated dosage of hearty night music, with the swinging pulses and tasty blends of music that both predate the squared-off rhythms of rock & roll and, these days, sound fresh once again.

Good guitarists are a dime a dozen, but Little Charlie Baty plays one mean axe. There is more than lick-spitting hubris in his fretwork. Nuances and eloquence make all the difference. Baty's solo on "Kansas City Woman" is a lexicon of blues riffs in miniature, a well-chiseled improvisation based on venerable blues licks. On the instrumental workout tune "Jump Start," his guitar plunges into action with a thick dose of saucy triple stops. What is essentially a string of short, pointed phrases

are strung together with pregnant pauses and surprising twists.

But he couldn't do it alone: the Nightcats are as reliable and unpretentious a unit as a blues guy could want. Drummer Dobie Strange and bassist Jay Peterson lay down an unswerving foundation and harmonica player/vocalist Rick Estrin, urbane and robust, has the right idea about keeping up the blues frontman tradition. (reviewed on CD)
—josef woodard



JIM HALL

ALL ACROSS THE CITY—Concord Jazz 384: *BEIJA-FLO; BEMSHA SWING; YOUNG ONE; R.E.M. STATE; ALL ACROSS THE CITY; DROP SHOT; SOMETHING TELLS ME; BIG BLUES.*

Personnel: Hall, guitar; Gil Goldstein, keyboards; Steve LaSpina, bass; Terry Clarke, drums.

★ ★ ★

JOSHUA BREAKSTONE

SELF-PORTRAIT IN SWING—Contemporary 14050: *SELF-PORTRAIT IN SWING; COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS; WILL YOU STILL BE MINE; SOME ENCHANTED EVENING; IF EVER I WOULD LEAVE YOU; DON'T TAKE YOUR LOVE FROM ME.*

Personnel: Breakstone, guitar; Kenny Barron, piano; Dennis Irwin, bass; Kenny Washington, drums.

★ ★ ★

Jim Hall takes off in several directions in this varied album of mostly unfamiliar tunes, save for Monk's "Bemsha Swing." It's a thoroughly pretty collection, especially side two, with Gil Goldstein discreetly wrapping Hall in all manner of velvety backgrounds—voices, strings, you name it—through the magic of the modern keyboard. On "Drop Shot" there is even some presumably ersatz vibraphone, which blends nicely with Hall's quirky melody.

Hall's guitar is typically lean. You rarely hear anything more hurried than eighth notes, and double-time runs turn up about as often as total eclipses of the moon. The more showy stuff comes from the fine work of bassist Steve LaSpina and Goldstein in his piano mode. There's some nice, though nervous, interplay when Goldstein and Hall go one-on-one for a chorus on "Bemsha." They dance around each other, like a couple of guys who've been forced to share the same bed and are afraid of accidental contact, least it be misinterpreted.

"R.E.M." is a zig-zagging little original, meaning "rapid eye movement." It has several moods. There's the playful theme, then an open-ended free interval full of straws in the

1 MARCUS ROBERTS. "The Single Petal Of A Rose" (from *THE TRUTH IS SPOKEN HERE*, RCA Novus) Roberts, solo piano; Ellington, composer.

"The Single Petal Of A Rose" from *The Queen's Suite*. I don't think it was Duke. The touch was a little different. Duke usually got a more percussive sound in the top register, and it seemed a little hurried in a couple of places. If it wasn't Duke it must've been a transcription. Whoever was playing it I give credit for just playing it, not adding too much to it or trying to play a blowing chorus, just playing it as a concert piece. It's perfect just the way it is. It's a beautiful tune, very much like "The Star-Crossed Lovers." They're both in D flat. It's almost like a piano prelude. Five stars for the composition.

Four stars for the performance. It could be Kenny Werner from a record he did of Ellington and Strayhorn piano music, and didn't Marcus Roberts record this recently? I haven't heard it but I know he's an Ellington scholar.

2 CHICK COREA. "So In Love" (from *AKOUSTIC BAND*, GRP) Corea, piano; John Patitucci, bass; Dave Weckl, drums; Cole Porter, songwriter.

"So In Love." That could be Chick Corea with John Patitucci and Dave Weckl. Great tune. They had a neat idea for an arrangement and I wished the rhythm they set up in the opening statement of the melody could've carried over into the improvisation. The lyric to that tune is kind of mysterious but I felt the performance was very obvious. My personal taste would be to hear something a little more subtle, a little more mysterious, that might build from there. Three stars.

3 JEANNE LEE AND RAN BLAKE. "Lover Man" (from *THE LEGENDARY DUETS*, RCA Bluebird) Lee, vocal; Blake, piano.

That was Jeanne Lee and Ran Blake. This was more of a duo performance in that Ran was really using the piano to color the lyric and the contrast of his harmonic color and her voice was very effective. Then she, in turn, responded to what he was doing.

I felt it was a much more committed performance, that they were doing that tune for a particular reason, that they'd thought about what they wanted to say with it. I also liked the way it was recorded so that her voice had a real immediacy about it and that the piano stepped out of the shadows occasionally and then went back in. Ran also did some very nice low-register harmonic colors I liked. Five stars.

FRED HERSCH

by Michael Bourne

Whether he's playing one of his own gigs or backing one of the jazz greats, pianist Fred Hersch is one of the most active musicians around the scene. Hersch came from Cincinnati to New York in 1977 and soon was working with Sam Jones, Art Farmer, and Joe Henderson. Since then he's played for Stan Getz, Sheila Jordan, Charlie Haden, Jane Ira Bloom, Lee Konitz, Meredith D'Ambrosio, Roseanna Vitro, Eddie Daniels, and Toots Thielemans.

Horizons, his first trio album in 1984, was followed by *Sarabande* in 1987, and this spring Sunnyside will release a new recording of his working trio with bassist Michael Formanek and drummer Jeff Hirshfield. They're sometimes joined by saxophonist Joe Lovano and trumpeter Tim Hagans, and quite often he's on the road with singer Janis Siegel. Fred and Janis recorded duets last year on *Short Stories* (Atlantic) and Fred was featured as soloist and arranger of French classics on *The French Collection* (EMI). Hersch played a jazz-and-



classical concert last year with his trio and Marin Alsop's Concordia Orchestra at Town Hall, something Hersch hopes to do again—if he's not doing something else just as interesting.

This was his first Blindfold Test and he was given no information about the music played.

4 DON PULLEN. "Reap The Whirlwind" (from *NEW BEGINNINGS*, Blue Note) Pullen, piano, composer; Gary Peacock, bass; Tony Williams, drums.

Obviously a Cecil Taylor influence. The obvious guess would be Don Pullen. What I liked was that it has very simple musical materials but used really well. The energy level was really good and the trio sounded like they really knew where they were going. It did what it set out to do. It sounded like the pianist was really in command. I felt there was a time continuum the drummer was laying down which left the piano player and the bass player freer to interact.

It wasn't the kind of interaction throwing a ball back and forth. It was the interaction of people doing things simultaneously, at least in the first section where it was very high energy. It definitely sounded like a working trio, that they play together a lot, because they took a lot of chances. 4½ stars.

5 ELIANE ELIAS. "Cross Currents" (from *CROSS CURRENTS*, Blue Note) Elias, piano, composer; Eddie Gomez, bass; Peter Erskine, drums.

I liked the original compositional idea. I would've liked to have heard more contrast between the sections. I felt in the solo I missed space and interaction between the

trio. The rhythm section was pretty predictable. People weren't throwing curves at each other. It was more of a power trio than an interactive trio. I would've liked to have heard more dynamics. That's the thing I missed, because the initial theme was so interesting; but for me the solo didn't fulfill the promise of the original idea. I thought they could've made more out of it. 3½ stars. I'd guess Eliane. The touch and the time feel. Also the fact that it was very composed. It's obviously somebody who knows how to write, and she does.

6 ROLAND HANNA. "Prelude" (from *'ROUND MIDNIGHT*, Town Crier) Hanna, solo piano, composer.

It's very familiar. Part of it sounded like a Scriabin prelude but I'm not sure what it was. Whoever it was, my compliments again for just playing the piece as a piece and not doing too much with it. It makes a nice statement by itself. It sounds like one of Roland Hanna's piano preludes. He's knowledgeable about classical music and there's something about the tone that he gets, a pretty full tone. He's a romantic player and also has very good taste that he would do something like that and just let it sit. He likes good piano music, regardless of the genre. Five stars. I'd say the performance of that piece did what it had to do. It was very simply and very elegantly played. **db**

SAL SALVADOR

SAL SEES HIS WAY CLEARLY WITH A NEW BOP/SCAT/FUSION QUINTET, CRYSTAL IMAGE.

by Brooke Wentz

“I just fell into playing with big bands,” says guitarist/bandleader Sal Salvador. “I really didn’t want to do that. I was happy improvising. But some of the most fun I had was playing with somebody else; just sitting back and letting them call the tunes.”

Salvador let leaders Stan Kenton, Mundell Lowe, and Oscar Pettiford call the tunes during the '50s and '60s, but by the '60s Salvador was calling the shots, forming his big band Colors of Sound in 1960, The Sal Salvador Quartet in 1965, and a five-member group called Crystal Image by 1988. He accompanied the likes of Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan, and Duke Ellington in the '50s, dueted with Sonny Stitt in Bert Stern’s and Aram Avakian’s *Jazz On A Summer’s Day*, and had Maynard Ferguson, David Amram, and Doc Severinsen featured as sidemen in his own big band. But today, Salvador focuses all energies on Crystal Image, his five-piece harmony, bop-fusion band featuring guitarist Mike Giordano, bassist Phil Bowler, drummer Greg Burrows, and scat singer Barbara Oakes. Produced by Teo Macero, with arrangements by Hank Levy, Phil Bolard, Salvador, and Macero, Crystal Image takes off where Mundell Lowe’s two-guitar group left off, combining Salvador’s lush guitar lines with Oakes’ wide-ranging vocal inflections.

“We started playing gigs around a year and a half ago,” Salvador recounts. “Barbara Oakes came in one night and sat in. I liked the way she sang and thought this would add something different to the group. So I asked her if she could read horn parts and do a three-part harmony. At that point, the group had begun recording but I got rid of the tape and we started again with Barbara. I then called Teo and asked him to help. He knew exactly how to balance it, and I’ve never been happier.”

Unquestionably, the Macero flavor lingers in the punchy presence of the soloist and an overall sparkling brilliance—a sound he gets at the touch of a button. Hints of George Benson, Bill Evans, and Chick Corea come to mind, as Macero injects his own blend of percussive Latin grooves. “Teo said, ‘What you have is great. It is a different sound,’” explains Salvador. “He would never touch your sound, but Teo would say something like, ‘That might go good at a club, but on a record it will fall apart.’ So we would take the ending and put it in front and if the beginning was good, use it in the middle.”



As a musician whose formative years in music were guided by neither teachers nor instruction books, Salvador has established himself as an author and teacher. Having written 10 guitar theory books with five more on the burner, he has compensated for his lack of formal education. He grew up in the small Connecticut town of Stafford Springs, taking up guitar at age 17 when his family moved to Springfield, Massachusetts in 1943. “I learned by buying music of well-known guitar players and practicing eight hours a day,” recalls Salvador. “Eventually I was able to read and play pieces but still couldn’t play a job, because I didn’t know how to use the material. Finally, some musicians took a chance with me. I made lots of mistakes but took notes at home. Soon I landed the best job in Springfield—a jazz gig—seven nights a week for a year.”

On Tommy Dorsey’s advice, he moved to New York City in 1949 where he met guitarists Johnny Smith, Tal Farlow, and Chuck Wayne. He shared a room with Farlow, guitarist Jimmy Raney, and alto saxophonist Phil Woods; four boys in heaven, playing together from midnight till noon. Henry Volvey, who had taught John Collins and Joe Pass, took Salvador under his tutelage and eventually met session musicians through Johnny Smith, who was on staff at NBC. He landed work as a staff musician at Columbia Records, and in 1950 a memorable break caught him by surprise.

“I hooked up with the trombone player Eddie Bert. He and I were on a gig with King Guion’s band. He had a big band with a double-rhythm section—two basses, two guitars, two drums, two pianos. It was at the Glenn Island Casino and Eddie and I use to practice jazz riffs between sets. Once I said to him, ‘You have a name. Why don’t you record?’ And he said, ‘Well, I never thought of pursuing it.’ Later he made a couple of calls and asked me to be on his record.”

“Now, Eddie had played with Stan Kenton. Stan called him and said he was looking for a guitar player. So when Stan came to town,

Eddie played his record for him. One night when Tal, Jimmy, and I were together in the apartment, Stan called. Kenton was known as a very generous guy because his band was the highest paid band in the country. When we were broke and the phone rang, we would joke and say, ‘That’s Stan. Tell him we don’t want all that money.’ So when the phone rang, I thought it was Tal putting me on and almost said, ‘Get lost.’ Instead I practically jumped out of my seat!”

Salvador became a featured soloist with the Kenton band and played with him for 18 months. He met Maynard Ferguson, Lee Konitz, and Zoot Sims through Kenton, followed by a stint of session work at ABC. By the late '50s, Sal was accompanying some of the finest vocalists of the time, such as Johnny Mathis, Sarah Vaughan, Peggy Lee, Tony Bennett, Rosemary Clooney, and Marlene Dietrich, to name a few. Colors in Sound, Salvador’s big band, started up in 1960; not the most practical year with the advent of rock & roll. “Maynard was the last one to drop his band,” comments Salvador. “I should have seen it through, but I kept playing and in 1965 dropped the band.”

By the early '70s, he had begun teaching at the University of Connecticut at Bridgeport and joined forces with fellow-guitarist Allen Hanlon as a duo. He released two albums on the BeeHive label with pianist Billy Taylor and drummer Joe Morello (*Starfingers* and *Juicy Lucy*) and two albums on the GP label, *Parallelogram* and *Live At The U. Of Bridgeport* (with Hanlon). Then founder and owner of Stash Records Bernie Brightman called Salvador and said, “How about doing a record for us?” He took him up on the offer and recorded *The World’s Greatest Jazz Standards* and *In Our Own Sweet Way* with his quartet and *Sal Salvador Plays Gerry Mulligan* with Randy Brecker and Nick Brignola followed by *Crystal Image*. And 1990 marks the beginning of a new era for Salvador and his group Crystal Image—there’s a second Macero-produced recording already in the can with an upcoming tour to follow. db

CHUCK LEAVELL

SOUTHERN ROCK’S TOP HIRED GUN RENEWS TIES WITH THE STONES, MIXING TECHNOLOGY AND TRADITION.

by Robin Tolleson

When keyboardist Chuck Leavell isn’t touring as guest with The Rolling Stones, Fabulous Thunderbirds, or Allmans, or in the studio

LEARN SAXOPHONE THE WAY ERNIE WATTS DID. AT BERKLEE.

with Dion, Dave Edmunds, or The Black Crowes, he tends to a 1200-acre tree farm in Dry Branch, Georgia, near where things began some 20 years ago. "That's my second career. When I go home, I'm really in the woods," he laughs.

Born in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1952, Leavell made his way to Muscle Shoals by 1967, where he got some studio work, appearing on Freddy North's soul classic "Don't Take Her, She's All I've Got." It was a good time to be a Southern rock & roller. There was Lynyrd Skynyrd, Marshall Tucker, The Charlie Daniels Band, and a new label, Capricorn, being put together in Macon, Georgia. To Leavell in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, it was big doings. He and a bass player friend had to check out the action.

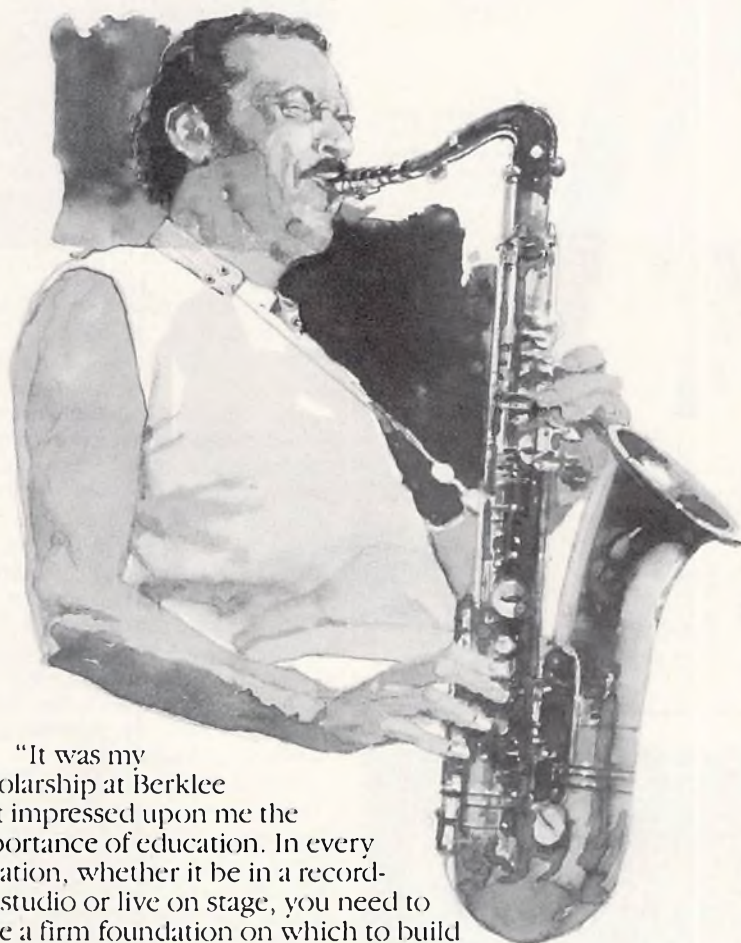


"We drove over, rode around town, saw the record company offices, saw the studio, saw some musicians hanging around," he says. "In a week, we had packed our bags and moved to Macon."

Leavell quickly found studio work, and went on the road with Alex Taylor's group opening for a young Allman Brothers Band. "We would finish our set and pull the piano backstage. The Brothers would set up and I'd hang around and play along with the band. I got into the Brothers' groove and learned the repertoire by doing that backstage."

Leavell did a six-month stint with Dr. John, a time he refers to as his "college education." Then, shortly after the death of Duane Allman, Leavell was asked to join The Allman Brothers Band. He stayed from the album *Brothers And Sisters* until the group broke up in 1976. Leavell traveled with a nine-foot concert Model D 1955 Steinway grand piano. "The road crew hated me, but we did it. I was adamant about getting a good sound.

"The Brothers were so clever with the remakes that they did, like 'Can't Lose What You Never Had' and 'Don't Want You No More.' They updated it and took it where it had never been. And they had Muddy Wa-



"It was my scholarship at Berklee that impressed upon me the importance of education. In every situation, whether it be in a recording studio or live on stage, you need to have a firm foundation on which to build a career. Berklee gave me that foundation."

—Ernie Watts

The credits of Grammy Award-winning saxophonist Ernie Watts ('66) include seventeen years with NBC-TV's "Tonight Show" Orchestra; studio sessions for major jazz and pop figures such as Cannonball Adderley, Quincy Jones, Charlie Haden, Whitney Houston, Frank Zappa, Pink Floyd, etc.; the last Rolling Stones tour and recording for films and television, including "Ghostbusters," "Bootsie," "Night Court," "Cagney and Lacey," and many others.

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photo by Lisa Bogdan



Leavell on tour with Rolling Stone Mick Jagger.

DINO SAFARI

ters opening on major tours. We weren't the only band doing it, but we did make a concerted effort to educate the public on the blues."

Out of the Allman's blues, a more compact, jazzier sound was emerging from several bandmembers. "Jai Johanny Johanson, Lamar Williams, and myself would often rent an extra ballroom and get the crew to set up a small rig at the hotel when we might have a day off. And we'd go down and blow, man. Or we'd go down early at the sound check and play. We kind of became known as 'We Three.' And when the Brothers disbanded, we looked at each other and said, 'Well, what next?' We decided that since we already had something going we would just embellish it."

With the addition of guitarist Jimmy Nalls, Sea Level was born. That group put out four quality albums. "They called me the Little General, because I'd rehearse them to death," Leavell says. "I'm usually the last one to leave the club after a gig. I'm still trying to find a piano somewhere and everybody's on the bus waiting."

The pianist's natural love for playing may be traced back to his earliest influence. "I just loved it when my mother would sit down and play. Then she'd get up and do the housework and I'd try to imitate her. She was very good with me about expressiveness. She'd say, 'Chuck, make a thunderstorm.' And I'd get down on the low end and rumble and rumble, just piddling around. 'Make a rainfall now.' It was a little silly, but to a six-year-old kid it was such a joy."

Leavell's mom enjoyed artists like Roger Williams and Ferrante & Teicher. "It wasn't very experimental, but they could play and it did make an impression," says Chuck. "Later I started listening to people that would play on Wilson Pickett or Aretha Franklin records. I didn't realize until later that Aretha was doing a lot of that. I got into McCoy Tyner and Mose Allison. Leon Russell, Corea, Hancock. Miles Davis had everybody in the world playing. And to this day, Keith Jarrett is my favorite piano player."

"I don't pretend to have chops like Art Tatum or Oscar Peterson," he says. "I'm more of a rock & roll player, but I like to

encompass all those things. I guess you could say I'm a jack of all trades, master of none. I have a certain expertise in rock & roll, but my heart lies with the jazz guys."

The diversity of Leavell's resume is fascinating—Kitty Wells, Hank Williams, Jr., Tim Weisberg, Marshall Tucker, Keith Richards, Sea Level, the T-Birds, Mick Jagger, and The Rolling Stones. *Steel Wheels* is his second trip out with the Stones. (He did the 1982 tour.) "My role has expanded, somewhat sadly because of the death of Ian Stewart," Leavell says. "Stew was like my big brother. We spent time listening to music together—Albert Ammons, Meade Lux Lewis, James P. Johnson, Pete Johnson, early Oscar Peterson. All he cared to listen to was boogie woogie, with maybe a little Duke Ellington or Count Basie thrown in."

"During the *Undercover* and *Dirty Work* albums, we would sneak off—'Hey man, let's find Studio B and see if anybody's in there.' We'd go in and have a little four-handed boogie-woogie going on."

Leavell gives a few cues and sets some tempos during the show, but he knows he's not musical director. "Keith [Richards] is the MD. He's the main man," Leavell says, obviously enjoying the high-profile tour, the private planes, and first-class catered meals for all. Then there's the musical aspect of it, and the "honor" of sharing the stage with the Stones. "Their solo records are good. Mick's and Keith's, as well as Bill's, and Charlie's jazz orchestra thing. But it's just not the phenomena that is The Rolling Stones when you put those five guys together. Sometimes I'll be engrossed in my playing, and look around and say, 'There's Charlie Watts,' or 'There's Mick Jagger over there, there's Keith.' I still have to slap myself in the face every night."

Leavell is very pleased with the Korg SG-1D for his piano sounds on tour. "And my new baby is the MIDI B-3. It's like a touch-sensitive Hammond B-3, and I can split the keyboard. I can trigger piano or Wurlitzer or something on my left hand and play the organ with my right."

"Playing music is such a love for me. To be able to do it with these guys is a real kick." db

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