

# DOWN BEAT

Jazz, Blues & Beyond

June 1990, \$1.95 U.K. £2.25

## Cecil Taylor

**LITTLE FEAT**

**COUNT BASIE ORCHESTRA**

**ROOTS, RIFFS AND RHYTHM**  
**13TH ANNUAL STUDENT MUSIC AWARDS**



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Cecil Taylor



Little Feat



Count Basie



Charles Lloyd

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# DOWN BEAT

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# Cecil Taylor

By Gene Santoro

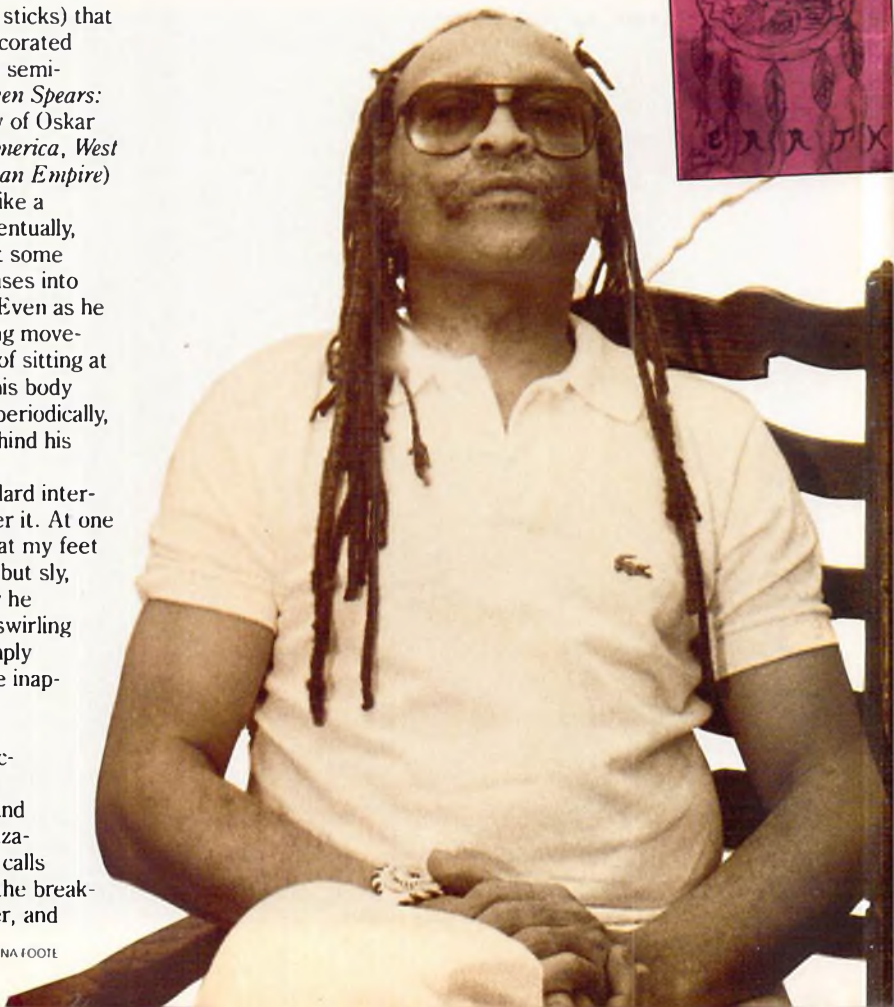
## AN AMERICAN RO

Outside, the bricks are peeling old paint and the shutters are missing, warped, or precarious; but inside, pianist/composer/bandleader Cecil Taylor's townhouse is being massively renovated. "I have the work done in stages, when I have the money," he says, by way of explaining the stacks of aluminum studs and two-by-fours, the occasional dangling loops of BX cable, and the hole in the floor where a toilet will someday be. He's launched into a tour of the house, a thumbnail history of it and the neighborhood ("Five people were murdered here."), and a quick rundown of his pets—the Akita who, for three weeks, shat spitefully on the parlor-level's parquet floors because Taylor was out of town, and the white-pawed black cat who obsessively leaps onto the nearest available lap for stroking. What I figure is that Taylor, more cautious than a cat, is checking me out.

After half an hour or so, we gradually settle into what was meant to be the dining room. Aside from a plain wooden bench and a cracked captain's chair and an empty magnum of Freixenet champagne (where Taylor inserts his burning incense sticks) that remains placed at a strategic point on the floor, it's decorated with a handful of posters from the pianist's past, great semi-orderly piles, and rows of books (*Dance Of Siva*, *Broken Spears: Aztec Accounts of The Conquest of Mexico*, a biography of Oskar Kokoschka, Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, *Kaffir Boy In America*, *West Africa Under Colonial Rule*, *The History Of The Persian Empire*) around the fireplace, and a semicircular table cut out like a quarter-moon, with a lone chair in its arc's center. Eventually, after fidgeting in and out of the kitchen ("Do you want some juice? An orange? I wish I had some beer."), Taylor eases into that chair and says, "So what do you want to know?" Even as he says it, his head and body begin the kind of punctuating movements familiar to anyone who's ever seen his version of sitting at the piano: he throws his head back, drastically shifts his body weight, squirms and laughs and bites off phrases and periodically, as if he's starting to feel trapped, cavorts out from behind his protective table to dance and spin.

Taylor doesn't actually refuse to adhere to the standard interview format—I ask you a specific question, you answer it. At one point, for instance, he glances at the yellow legal pad at my feet covered with scrawled questions and asks, wide-eyed but sly, "What is all that writing? My, my, my." But by the way he handles the few questions he allows to penetrate the swirling associative torrent virtually any query sets off, he simply makes interviewing irrelevant, a category and practice inapplicable to himself.

Which is also essentially what he's done in musical terms over the last 30-odd years. Using his "unit structure" building blocks to create varilength pieces that detonated the song-form limits that had both housed and imprisoned jazz, replacing the drive of a basic, recognizable pulse with an extremely elastic rhythmic sense he calls "the wave," uniting in his idiosyncratic pianistic voice the breakthroughs of Monk, Bartok, Milt Jackson, Horace Silver, and



# MANTIC

"So I said to myself, 'You have to try to understand that pursuing music is a choice that you make, and that any anger you feel as a result of that choice is "what makes the world go round."'"

Henry Cowell, Taylor is an obsessive individualist, an American Romantic whose inward-gazing, relentlessly kinetic music either forces listeners to relax into its egocentric demands or drives them off. Though he no longer has to wash dishes to make ends meet (as he was doing in 1962, when he won DB's "New Star" award), he's no less compromising about his musical visions today, when he's got commissions, a massive 11-CD set of his work, *In Berlin* (on FMP, see p. 38), and his first domestic release in a decade, *In Florescence* (on A&M, see p. 31). "This is the first time," he says, between talking of spending six months touring Europe and the pieces he's been asked to write by his alma mater (the New England Conservatory) for a student orchestra he plans to perform with in the late fall, "that I know what I'm going to be doing more than a week from now."

When Taylor speaks, his voice slides fluently through emphases. He stretches syllables like a scat singer, drops his pitch an octave and his volume to a whisper, slips into a cadence that mimicks blank verse and rounds it off with gradual acceleration and rising dynamics, marks off his associative insights and false leads with a rhythmic pause or a barking laugh that seems to suggest his own surprise and delight. In that way, his rhythmic and tonal speech, and especially his thick, looping, non-linear associative clusters, which make assertions that he seems to forget about until whole paragraphs have passed, strikingly recall his gnarled, inner-seeking musical visions. But since language, like music, has an essence that resolutely escapes notation, you'll have to imagine the slides and dips and slurs and accents. For the rest, a suspension of disbelief and patience are enough. . . .

"I was washing dishes in a restaurant at the same time I was being written about in places like **DOWN BEAT**, and it was very good for me, because I had to decide what I really wanted to do. Did I want to pursue my ideals badly enough? It was the only way to learn that I did. So I washed dishes while the guy who owned the restaurant played my records, along with Miles' records and Coltrane's records. I quit after a few weeks, though. Then I went out to a place called The Take 3, and I got the job performing. And it's been going and stopping like that ever since for me. We—me, [saxophonist] Jimmy Lyons, [drummer] Sunny Murray—worked there for 13 weeks; it was the longest gig I ever had in America. Sometimes the magnificent [bassist] Henry Grimes would come in: I remember one night he did, and we played for three hours but I thought we'd played for about 10 minutes. Coltrane heard us there, and arranged for us to make our first Scandinavian tour.

"But The Take 3 gig was very important, because I had to understand that music, my music, was what I wanted to do. So I said to myself, 'You have to try to understand that pursuing music is a choice that you make, and that any anger you feel as a result of that choice is [sings] "what makes the world go round"'—that's a line from a song Sinatra sang in the late '40s. So you then begin the process of really getting down to it: the

**"I love James Brown, I love Aretha Franklin, I love Marvin Gaye. . . . I like music that makes me dance. Something is happening to me now—I'm not going to say what."**

distance between whatever excellence it is you're striving for in whatever it is you're trying to convey and the person you would like to be. That's gradually coming together. After all [laughs], it's a life's work. But it means a minimum of confusion about life.

"I've been quoted—and they're all lies, all lies—as saying that I think of my playing as being related to the kind of leaps a dancer makes in space. You know, my mother used to take me to see tap dancers when I was little. So I saw Bill Robinson, and The Step Brothers, and The Nicholas Brothers, and Baby Hodges—I saw them all. In '62, when I was working at The Take 3, I didn't have any money but the Bolshoi [Ballet] came to town, so I went to see them at the Met—*Swan Lake*. Now I had to work that Sunday night, but I said, 'The lessons I've gotten about what music can do'—because the prima ballerina had danced the dying swan three times, and three times we'd all wept. Even in the pictures you can see that the way the Russians interpret Tchaikovsky is rhythmical, where we experience it as songs. The melodies are, after all, beautiful, but they're very rhythmical.

"I spend a lot of time in discos. I love to dance. Lately, since I've been doing so much work, I haven't been listening to music very much, unfortunately. But I love James Brown, I love Aretha Franklin, I love Marvin Gaye—I thought he was extraordinary. I like music that makes me dance. Something is happening to me now—I'm not going to say what. But you ask these questions that can be taken in at least three different ways: you're not being duplicitous, you're being triplicitous [laughs]. As Billie Holiday said, 'Don't explain.' It's quite wonderful, actually.

"Last summer, I was invited to a festival for flamenco in Spain, honoring Carmen Amaya, a flamenco dancer who was one of the most prodigious musical lights that I ever saw, like Billie Holiday. I saw her for the first time in 1965, then again later at The Village Gate. The magic that I felt was much akin to what I felt when I first saw Billie Holiday when I was 12. I could not breathe, I could not think, all I could experience was what was coming from her.

"So I was invited to this festival in Begur as a guest. They had erected this huge tent on the edge of this mountain, and in the evening there was a wind called the *tramontana* that blew from the Mediterranean, which was just over this mountain. Now, I had just come from spending two weeks on the island of Crete; the last night, my friend and I were taken way up into the mountains there for a wedding. Well . . . [laughs]. That was something, but we don't want to talk about it.

"So the next night, there I am in Begur, and one of the things I see is a film of Carmen Amaya—outside, on a huge screen. I am introduced to all these people, of different cultures. What happened was, there were some musicians from China, an extraordinary group from Pakistan, flamenco dancers, obviously. It was also like a living historical tableau. Sabicas was there, representing the older form; one flamenco group, of about six people, represented the sort of mid-century point of view; but there was a young woman of about 23 named Martine who, when she sang, Sabicas himself cried. And the intensity of her partner's dancing took me back to Amaya. One of the magical things about dancers is how they project: if they're 5'8", they can look like they're 6'4". This young woman looked like she was well over six feet.

"Consequently, what I've been receiving is the wealth of different cultures. Experiences show you that not only are you an American artist, but if you are allowed to go to other countries and other cultures, you have something to bring and share and exchange. Once you do this, you begin to understand there is a commonality of human experience that transcends—of course, obviously, right—but also that if you make the commitment to the

elevation of the song, then you begin to see all kinds of linkages to people everywhere.

"Wherever I go, what I find is that when I perform now it always hearkens back to something that took me years to understand, something my father said to me when I was in those really very traumatic years, though all years [laughs], are traumatic. I mean, it took me about nine years, maybe 10, to find Jimmy Lyons, or for us to find each other. For the first six years or so after that, we would average maybe three or four gigs a year. So, for most of that time, Cecil was being irritable, angry. My father was a sheriff when I was growing up way out in Corona [in Queens], out by the World's Fair, and he supported me even then, but I would say to him, 'You don't understand, you're just an Uncle Tom'—even though he put me through the Conservatory.

**"So I finished the concert, having said to everyone through the music, 'You're gonna sit there and listen, I'm gonna fix you all forever and ever and ever—and it came that they wanted more.'"**

"But finally, about four or five years ago, I was playing a concert at Carnegie Recital Hall. It was an interesting period: I was supposed to give a series of 14 concerts in Europe, but I had to cancel them because Europe turned out to be not nice, there were chiselers behind them. I said to myself, 'Here you are, at your advanced age, and not a pot to piss in. What are you gonna do?' So I got on the phone, and things started to move. The concert at Carnegie Recital Hall was part of a series of concerts in which you had, within the American hierarchy of different kinds of music, different cultural expressions of America. [Composer/french horn player] David Amram was the organizer.

"So I'm grumpy. What happens is, maybe for the first time in my life, I saw that it really didn't matter, because you, Cecil, were ready to do it, because you always had to overcome the shit. And then, that being done, it was wonderful to see that the hall was packed. So I finished the concert, having said to everyone through the music, 'You're gonna sit there and listen, I'm gonna fix you all forever and ever and ever and ever'—and it came that they wanted more. And I came out, and I played, and I understood what it was my father used to say to me: 'I am to serve.' That's what he'd told me all those years; and to finally understand it was so wonderful, because you'd pleased so many people that there are no words.

**"B**ut we've gone a long way away from Begur. I decided, of course, that yes, I would play—they had this beautiful grand piano there. Well, Carmen Amaya was a gypsy, as you know, so I'm being asked to play first on the first night. So here I come out, and I'm gonna chant and woowoo—and the gypsies are all, 'Oh no, wait a minute, what the f\*\*k is this,' and the babies started screaming 'Ah-ah-ah-ah!', you know. Well, of course. But here I go. And you know, you do it for 15 minutes, and it becomes quiet. And then I noticed that on the days when I would be practicing, different members from different groups would come and just stand there and listen. One day, a young woman from Martinique came. We all lived in this one building; you could watch the Mediterranean from the rooftop, it was on three sides of that roof.

"What do I do when I go to dance? They had a party; all the dancers were there [laughs]. A wonderful thing. So I waited, and waited, you know. Each room had different kinds of music. And then, when I got ready, I danced. And the dancers understood—which to me was the solidification of the common-ness of our purpose, and it broke through.

"On that level—when I was in Boston [in early March], I wrote a piece—the first time I've been asked [laughs], to go back to the New England Conservatory, in this capacity—that brought out that common-ness once again; only this time it was in America. We worked for two weeks for these two concerts. There was a Chinese, a Japanese-American, four women singers,

one of whom was from Poland. Other people from other places.

"Now, I have certain ideas about what I do, as musical theater and composition, and how I set it up. So in the middle of this, I pick up the paper, and one of the people that I love, I found out, was playing at The Regatta Bar. So I take three of my musicians and we go there, and there's Milt Jackson. And he plays a piece that J.J. Johnson wrote, 'First Love.' It was such an extraordinary solo. It wasn't that he has changed. I mean, I first heard Milt when I was 16, and nothing much has changed, except that The Regatta Bar is now more money and Milt Jackson is one of the few musicians who, I am quite glad to say, has made some money. And he certainly deserves it—the joy that he's given me. To see this man so many years later still doing it. I said, 'Okay now, young adults, that's one part, but here's what I want. You just wait, be patient. He's gonna play a blues for you the like of which you've probably not heard. That's why I wanted you here. You don't have to do it that way, but I want you to be aware of this.' So we wait, and boy, he does it. And I say, 'Now, that's where I came from. I don't do it that way, but it's a part of me.'

"So then I decided to go to Washington, and a friend of mine and I go walking by Blues Alley, and who's going to be there the next night? I said, 'Oh shit, I'm going to stay, you know.' 'But it's all sold out.' 'But you said we had passes.' And some people we know say, 'We can't go, take our passes.' Well, I remember when I first heard Sonny Rollins: it was in 1951 when I was living in Boston, and he was playing with the demon Miles then. Well, when he came in—I hadn't seen or talked to Sonny in quite a while, though I remember when we—no, I can't tell you all the stories or you'll never come back again. Anyway, he was marvelous. Not only was he marvelous, but I learned so much from him about what I wasn't able to accept.

"What I mean is, I was up in Minton's one Saturday night, I was about 21 years old, and Milt Jackson was leading a band with Sonny in it. Saturday night! In Harlem! Everybody's, 'Hey, hup, ho.' Then all of a sudden, Milt and Sonny played this piece, and you could hear everybody breathe. I said, 'Oh.' That, to me, is what it's about. You play from the heart. If that's what you really love, it doesn't matter if there's one person there or 10,000." DB



TOM COR

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Cecil Taylor plays Bosendorfer Imperials in concert

### CECIL TAYLOR SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>as a leader &amp; solo</b><br/> <i>IN FLORESCENCE</i>—A&amp;M CD 5286<br/> <i>IN BERLIN '88</i>—FMP<br/> <i>ONE TOO MANY SALTY SWIFT AND NOT GOODBYE</i>—hat ART 3011<br/> <i>3 PHASIS</i>—New World 303<br/> <i>AIR ABOVE MOUNTAINS (BUILDINGS WITHIN)</i>—enja 3005<br/> <i>NEFERTITI, THE BEAUTIFUL ONE, HAS COME</i>—Arista/Freedom 1905</p> | <p><i>SILENT TONGUES</i>—Arista/Freedom 1005<br/> <i>SOLO</i>—Trio 7067<br/> <i>THE GREAT CONCERT OF</i>—Prestige 34003<br/> <i>CONQUISTADOR!</i>—Blue Note 84260<br/> <i>UNIT STRUCTURES</i>—Blue Note 84237<br/> <b>with Max Roach</b><br/> <i>HISTORIC CONCERTS</i>—Soul Note 1100/1<br/> <b>with John Coltrane</b><br/> <i>COLTRANE TIME</i>—United Artists 5638</p> |
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# LITTLE FEAT



## LIFE WITHOUT LOWELL/ROLLING PAST THE PAST

By Josef Woodard

**O**f all the stories in the naked city of pop music, Little Feat's ranks among the strangest. It was the band that the late Lowell George built. George, briefly a member of Frank Zappa's Mothers of Invention, was blessed with a stinging slide-guitar style, a distinctive tenor voice with its own rules of phrasing, and—as a songwriter—a real flair for curveball variations on r&b traditions.

Neon Park (whose surrealistic album jacket art has accompanied Little Feat albums since 1972) deemed George—on the occasion of his sudden death of an apparent heart attack—a strange personification of “Orson Welles and Howlin’ Wolf.”

With venturesome keyboardist Billy Payne, drummer Richie Hayward, and—beginning with *Sailin’ Shoes*—guitarist Paul Barrere, bassist Kenny Gradney, and percussionist Sam Clayton, George and company cooked up a compelling rock stew with a variety of stylistic ingredients. From New Orleans, they “borrowed” the second-line groove for such tunes as “Fat Man In The Bathtub.” They also made generous nods in the direction of jazz—both in terms of an improvisatory working process and with jazz-inclined harmonic and rhythmic touches.

Over the rocky course of several albums during the '70s, Little Feat established itself among a handful of groups (The Band and NRBQ among them), making music that dug into American musical roots while redefining them. With the sonic help of George Massenburg (their producer since 1974's *Feats Don't Fail Me Now*), they made an oft-times perfect compromise between the rawness of a garage band and the experimentation of a studio band.

George died while on tour in 1979 (ironically, during one of the band's many “breakups”), and it was taken for granted by the band and its fans that an era was over. Thus, many were surprised when the band came back to life after nearly a dec-

ade with the '88 album *Let It Roll*. Just after that album was released, Payne reflected on the feelings leading up to his resuscitation of the band. “I’ve got to admit that the seed was planted for me to reform the band based on the fact that I didn’t get a chance to play like that with anyone else. I was a firm believer that we couldn’t do it without Lowell, however. When Lowell was alive—especially towards the end—I was a firm believer that we couldn’t do it *with him*.”

However successfully this version of Little Feat has forged its own direction, the ghost of Lowell George refuses to go away. The latter-day band still relishes the syncopated, funky pulses and hairpin turns, but lacks that incisive Georgian wit. Singer Craig Fuller (ex-Pure Prairie League) was added to the lineup, along with guitarist Fred Tackett—a veteran session player and an honorary member of the band since the mid-'70s. Fuller displays an eerie ability to mimic George's vocal tone, as when he sings a George classic like “Teenage Nervous Breakdown” live.

**U**pon the release of the new Little Feat's second album, *Representing The Mambo*, four members of the band gathered for a round table talk in the Burbank office of Warner Bros.—their label home since the very beginning 20 years ago. As Payne comments, “Thankfully, we’ve been welcomed back into the fold. The success of *Let It Roll* was a terrific vote of confidence.”

Hayward says, “It was almost like we never left.” Were the working conditions within the band as good as before? “It was better,” Hayward reports. “I found that when we got back together, a lot of smoldering hot spots had seemed to have gone out as far as our relationships with one another go. Things were much more positive all around.”

One sign of forward motion in the group

is the fact of the new album's more blatant eclecticism. “After the last album,” Payne says, “some folks asked, ‘What happened to the left turns?’ It wasn’t a matter of not having written them; in fact, ‘The Ingenue,’ which is on this album, was originally recorded for the first one. We wanted to let people know we’re back without going 180 degrees to show how nuts you are right off the bat.”

No one will accuse the new Little Feat album of driving down the middle of the road. From beginning to end, *Representing The Mambo* charts an varied course, making stops in the areas of rock & roll, funk, country & western, longer conceptual pop pieces, and the sort of steamy cadences—tightly interlocking parts and drummer Hayward's inimitable patterns—that can only be called Little Feat grooves.

Call them a progressive, swamp rock band: like ZZ Top grafted onto Steely Dan, the band turns its back on neither the cerebral nor the visceral aspects of the music. For instance, Payne's inveterate jazz leanings come through on *Representing The Mambo* more strongly than on *Let It Roll*. The silky chordal arabesques on “Silver Screen” are reminiscent of Joe Zawinul's writing (echoes of Weather Report have long played a role in the band sound)—not to mention Payne's brief McCoy Tyneresque piano solo. And the epic, cinematic structure of the title track is no garden-variety pop ditty.

That diversity, Payne believes, is all in a day's work for Little Feat. “We’ve had the type of career that, from album to album, causes people to think, ‘We know to expect a certain thing that we can identify with, but as for the rest, you can flip a coin about what they’ll come up with next.’ I hope we can continue to keep people guessing, including ourselves. The main object is keeping it fresh.”

Tackett observes, “That's what happens when you have so many writers and so

many singers in a band. We have Craig [Fuller], Billy, and Paul singing lead vocals, and then Richie and Sam singing. So, to go from 'Those Feat'll Steer Ya' Wrong Sometimes' to 'The Ingenue,' boy, you've got a real leap—from Nashville to New York City and beyond. That's what this band has always been about in the past, from 'Willin'' to 'Day At The Dog Races' [a 7/4 fusion-like instrumental from *Time Loves A Hero*]."

Payne is confident in the musical identity of Little Feat—of either the '70s or the '90s. "What Little Feat has and what The Rolling Stones have and what Igor Stravinsky had and Herbie Hancock has is a voice. There are a hundred violinists who are really great, but Itzhak Perlman has his own special tone and way of playing.

"It's the same with our band. I don't mind putting us up against that line. It's not to say we're better than anybody else, but we do have a voice that people can hear. It doesn't really matter whether we're playing country & western music or jazz or rock & roll. It's all Little Feat."

**P**art of the signature Little Feat approach has to do with finding a medium between innovation and tradition. On the new album, you hear the band's characteristic tendency to take a nearly conventional rhythm or genre and throw wrenches into the works, for the sake of keeping the music at least slightly off-kilter. As Barrere comments, "We used to do a lot more strange things in terms of rhythm turnarounds, flip-flopping the beat and so forth. That used to get us kicked off jukeboxes across the nation."

Often, the band's more intricate tunes are models of groove construction. The new tune "Woman In Love," for instance, is a squirming, maze-like arrangement of parts—guitars skittering atop Hayward's fendishly tilted backbeat. As Hayward explains, "People start to syncopate, you

hear what they're doing and play around it, instead of stepping on each other's feet."

Barrere continues, "That tune was interesting, also, in that the actual rhythm guitar part was spun in from the tailout. We took some parts that Fred had played from the tail section and moved them up through the piece [digitally] just to give the rhythm guitar a more interesting part. It all fit together like a strange jigsaw puzzle."

Identifiable as the band's guitar textures and Payne's keyboardistic aplomb are, one of the real hallmarks of the Little Feat sound is the loose-limbed, intelligent drumming of Hayward—one of rock's unsung heroes. Among the Iowa native's influences is Elvin Jones. "There's not many places you can do that kind of stuff," grins Hayward, "except in fades. I always used to turn up the fades on rock records, because that's where the best playing usually is."

Of the jazz connection, Tackett explains, "It is odd that we still are jazz fans, being rock & roll musicians. Somebody asked me the other day what it was like to play in this band. It's like being in a jazz band that plays rock & roll. We definitely play rock & roll, but the competence—everybody's playing ability—is on the level of a jazz player. Everybody plays that good and improvises that good and listens that good. Probably it has to do with the fact that we all come from a little bit of that background."

Hayward expands on the idea: "It's the old-time jazz players more than those around now. They would approach a song with a road map. Everybody knew where it was going, but they never really knew how they were going to get there. It was like a car rally, where, as long as you made the check points, you can take any route you want and go any speed you want."

Tackett: "We'll be playing a song, and have sections where we know someone is going to play a lick and then we'll all come

in together. And then there will be a piano solo, where Billy can play whatever he wants to play—which comes from the jazz school. And then he'll go [humms the transition lick for the coda of "Tripe-Faced Boogie"], and we'll all be in on the next thing. Miles Davis will do things and then cue the band for the next section. The same thing with Stockhausen."

Hmm, Miles Davis and Karlheinz Stockhausen? What other musicians are dear to the band's heart? "George Jones and Tammy Wynette," laughs Tackett. Hayward rejoins, "Count Basie, Ray Charles, Howlin' Wolf. . . ." "Cannonball Adderley. . . ."

"It's just a melting pot," Payne surmises. "A few years ago, I went with James Taylor to Milan, and [bassist] Lee [Sklar] and I went to this opera which turned out to be the opera of the year. I thought it was one of the top 10 shows I've seen in my life, in terms of music and spectacle, the entire ball of wax. I think it's all related. When it hits you and gets you excited as a human being—getting philosophical for a moment—that's the power of music, really."

Little Feat's reemergence may be part of a general warming trend in the music industry towards bluesier, less high-tech ideas, as witness Bonnie Raitt's recent Grammy coup with *Nick Of Time*. "It's amazing," Barrere offers. "A friend of mine said that guitarist Danny Gatton was signed to Elektra, and they want him to make a blues record, which I think says a lot for what Bonnie accomplished. It's the old dialogue about rhythm & blues raised all over again. That, after all, is where rock & roll developed from. The more we get back to those roots, the more I like it. You can only bang your head so long. You've got to stop and let the bruises heal."

Hayward says, laughing, "It's that thing about hitting your head with a hammer, because it feels so good when you stop."

DB

#### LITTLE FEAT'S EQUIPMENT

As road manager Scott Pinkerton says of Little Feat's gear, "It's a nice blend of old stuff and new stuff" (not unlike the music itself!) Among other things, Billy Payne plays a Yamaha RX88 and a DX7-2, and a Roland but also a souped-up Hammond B3. Guitarists Paul Barrere and Fred Tackett go the Fender route: Strats through Dual Showman amps. Bassist Kenny Gradney plays a Fender Power Jazz Bass and a Fender five-string. Craig Fuller plays a Taylor acoustic guitar. Sam Clayton plays LP congas and Richie Hayward plays a Pearl drum kit, Sabian cymbals, and Solid Select custom snares.

#### LITTLE FEAT DISCOGRAPHY

REPRESENTING THE MAMBO—Warner Bros. 26163  
LET IT ROLL—Warner Bros. 25750  
HOY-HOY—Warner Bros. 2BSK-3538  
DOWN ON THE FARM—Warner Bros. HS-3345  
WAITING FOR COLUMBUS—Warner Bros. 2BS-3140  
TIME LOVES A HERO—Warner Bros. BS-3015  
LAST RECORD ALBUM—Warner Bros. BS-2884  
FEATS DON'T FAIL ME NOW—Warner Bros. BS-2784  
DIXIE CHICKEN—Warner Bros. BS-2686  
SAILIN' SHOES—Warner Bros. BS-2600  
LITTLE FEAT—Warner Bros. WS-1890

No small feat: (l-r) Bill Payne, Fred Tackett, Craig Fuller, Paul Barrere, Sam Clayton, Richie Hayward, and Kenny Gradney.



MELODIE GIMPLE

# THE COUNT BASIE ORCHESTRA KEEPING THE SPIRIT IN A GHOST BAND



By Dave Helland



The Chief, 1904-1984

**W**hat makes the Count Basie Orchestra the CBO and not just a traveling archive of arthritic arrangements? And how will 18 men continue to sound like one, keeping the distinctive elements of the Basie swing machine—the driving rhythmic pulse, the loose precision, the whisper-to-a-scream-and-back-again dynamics—from either growing rusty or giving way to such un-Basie-like innovations as mic-ing each horn or, his greatest taboo, the pregnant 19th chord? What will keep it the CBO long after the last of the players actually hired by Basie—11, including singer Carmen Bradford—are no longer with the band?

It is the same things that keep any group together—whether a tribe or a corporation, a fraternity or an infantry squad—that have not simply kept the Basie Orchestra under the direction of Frank Foster on the road but

led to three Grammy nominations for their latest recording, *The Legend, The Legacy* (Denon 73790), made them Frank Sinatra's first choice as accompaniment at Madison Square Garden this month, and led to a recording session with George Benson. That project includes a duet with Bradford and an instrumental track featuring Benson stretching out on a guitar solo. Talk about "team spirit" and attention to detail or discuss the sociology of an oral tradition, it's the loyalty of people who share a distinguished past and look to pass it on to those who follow—not only to future band members, but through The Basie Way Clinics, to high school and college music students, too.

In the mid-'80s the Basie band lost its leadership, but not its head. First, Catherine Basie, who advised her husband on business matters, passed in the spring of 1983, followed a year later by Basie himself. Willard Alexander, who had booked the band since the late '30s, died a few months later, and the subsequent reorganization of his company led to a Chapter 11 filing. "Basie always said, 'Keep the band going as long as people want to hear it the way we do it,'" said the late saxophonist Eric Dixon, who led the band till Thad Jones took over and then again after Jones left.

Besides getting the band to the bus on time, it was also Dixon's job to replace Basie's ears—listening for the little parts that just weren't meshing, that weren't done the Basie Way. It was never a matter of just reading the charts—the Basie band never just read the charts.

**"WE DON'T PLAY THE NOTES — WE PLACE THE NOTES."**





Joe Williams: "The Basie band now plays for so many people—Diane Schuur, Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett, Ella Fitzgerald—and there is a reason why people seek this band out to play their music. They play very sympatico, very sympathetic music that inspires the singer. You get a chance to work with them for any length of time, they'll spoil you."

"Other people try to play like Basie, but they don't understand," explains singer Joe Williams. "They say, 'Tight like Basie.' The difference is Basie's band is loose. They can be loose because they are good listeners. The first thing I say to an orchestra is, 'If you can't hear everybody else in the orchestra, you're playing too loud.' The Basie band listens to each other."

On ballads, Basie wanted romance. On the swing tunes, he wanted hard swing. Solos should flow from the melody and show off the player's personality. The rhythm section should drive the band, but each player should internalize the rhythm. Everybody loose but everybody listening so when the band lays back on the eighth-note triplets—not slowing down but placing the notes just a shade behind the beat—everybody is there playing as one, and then everybody snaps back on the beat together. The band members can read music—though Basie himself didn't—but they memorize the 40 or 50 arrangements that make up the book because they aren't played the way they're written.

"Basie put that word 'swing' into the music as far as I'm concerned," says *Tonight Show* trumpeter Snooky Young, who left Jimmie Lunceford to join Basie in 1942. "It was a completely different style, and when

I went into that [Basie's] band, I'll tell you, I would be playing the music absolutely right but I was wrong most of the time because of the way they phrased things. You go to the Basie band right now and play the music exactly right but you'd be wrong. Those notes are just marks on a piece of paper—they make something out of those marks. You have to open up your ears to hear and feel the style of a band. Nobody can teach you that."

Four decades later Byron Stripling joined the band, taking over the lead-trumpet chair once occupied by Young, and nothing had changed. "All of our stuff is notated but you have to be able to hear it and be able to sing it, in order to play it," explains Stripling, who was hired by Basie and has been in and out of the band several times. "More than that, you have to know what has gone before. If a person comes in and does not have his credentials, if he has not studied, he will be totally lost in our music. This is not like a repertory band; these are people who played with Count Basie and they teach it to you. Like I was trained by Thad Jones and Frank Foster and before that I sat down with records and made my own transcriptions. I knew how Snooky approached playing lead with a swing concept. But you really have to get this stuff from the record player to your ear to the horn."

**T**he key to The Basie Way has always been the way it swung a simple, blues-rooted tune with a 4/4 beat. From the very beginning, with the All-American Rhythm Section of drummer Jo Jones, bassist Walter Page, guitarist Freddie Green, and Basie himself on piano, this was a band with a difference, and the difference was its rhythm section—never the complexity of its arrangements and certainly not the unique voice of a composer.

"If there was a lot of scuffling to make things work, it wasn't going to work," explains trombonist Bill Hughes, the band's senior member who joined in the mid-'50s. "It's not going to swing if you have to concentrate on playing it. The Chief was great on saying let's cut this part out and keep this part in."

Gunther Schuller, in *The Swing Era* (Oxford Univ. Press), traces the shift from simple timekeeping to providing a melodic rhythm: Green strumming the chord changes, Page's walking bass line, Jones' use of cymbals, and Basie's drum-like punctuation. The key to the 1990 Count Basie Orchestra is still in the rhythm section.

"I play for the band totally," explains drummer Duffy Jackson, who first played with them in the late '70s. "If you play for the band first, if you just try to swing the band and make the band feel that energy drive, then that transcends to the audience.

The last thing this band needs from any young drummer is for him to camouflage where the time is and just play fills."

But even without a rhythm section, the horn sections swing, as bassist Cleveland Eaton learned at one of the band's rare rehearsals. "Foster kicked off a fast tune and they were hot. They didn't need a drummer," says Eaton. "New drummers come in, first of all they're cocky. They think whatever tempo the drummer is in, the band has to go with them. BULLSHIT. With this band, the drummer goes with the band. Little Young Somebody coming in, just out of school hot, this band makes him look like a stone tenderfoot. The band goes its own time, goes straightahead like the drummer is not even there."

Eaton's own assignment is to set the tempo and play the tonic of each chord—providing both the harmonic and rhythmic foundation for the dozen or so notes on top, before stretching out by doing inversions. He is also the person that singer Carmen Bradford listens to—"for grease purposes"—since the death of Freddie Green. "Frank [Foster] will count off a tune where he thinks it is supposed to be, the drummer might be right over here, and Cleve is right in between, which is probably where it was supposed to be in the first place. They finally come together, but I'm already sweating by then."

"On a particular tune where the rhythm section has the intro, we are setting the tempo, the pace, and my role is to help create that tempo, to get the character of the arrangement off the ground before the band comes in," explains piano player Ace Carter, who led his own groups and played with bluesman Robert Junior Lockwood before joining. As for soloing: "I had been a Basie devotee most of my life, so it wasn't too hard to know what he was doing, his trademarks, but to know where to put it. . . . You could put the right thing in the wrong place. Knowing the difference comes from experience, from listening."

Charlton Johnson has taken over the crucial guitar chair. Like Green, he strums his acoustic guitar, never takes a solo, and uses no mic. Playing exclusively for the band, he positions the instrument for an up-and-out projection. The strings are bridged very high, each chord is attacked percussively.

"Pocket, that's what makes the Basie band distinctive," explains Quincy Jones, who sold his first arrangement, "Over The Rainbow," to Basie in 1953 for \$50. "The Basie band has always had that ability. The rhythm section starts out playing and all of a sudden the energy of four people locks everybody into that pocket. It's magical. It's what playing in a big band is all about, and it happens a lot to this band because you got all those guys there that know how to hold

**"You have to open up your ears to hear and feel the style of a band. Nobody can teach you that."**



Director Frank Foster

onto that tradition. Frank Foster wrote some of the greatest stuff for the band and he can teach young guys what it is all about—which is passing on the tradition.”

If you skim the history of the band from 1935, when Basie took over Benny Moten's band, through its discovery by John Hammond, who claimed to have guided Basie's hand in firing and hiring, and its success based on soloists like Lester Young, Buck Clayton, and Basie himself, to its disintegration in the late '40s, its hard to get a handle on what exactly was Basie's contribution besides his own playing. Likewise, the second band, formed by Basie in the early '50s after two years of leading a

combo, gained its fame when arranger Neal Hefti and singer Joe Williams joined. It's as if the “Soloists band” and the “Arrangers band” were rented cars that Basie drove when in fact these two swing machines were customized, tuned, and maintained, their parts replaced by The Chief himself.

“Basie was the glue that held it all together,” says Sammy Nestico, who started writing arrangements for the band in the late '60s when he got out of the service—for 17 years he'd been leader and arranger for The Airmen of Note and the Marine Corps Band. “Basie had this radar for the right tempo, the right feel. That simple style might fool people, but you have to give Basie this: he did what he did better than anybody. He didn't venture into any new areas, he wasn't innovative, but he won worldwide appeal. That was the only band where 18 players sounded like one.”

The oft-repeated story of Neal Hefti's “Little Darlin”—how Basie took a good uptempo arrangement, slowed it down, and

all my fast arrangements and slowing them down. It was that realization, and it hit me in a very dramatic way—that every tune belongs in the right tempo.”

The idea for The Basie Way Clinics was Dennis Wilson's, who, along with the A-Team (one member from each of the band's four sections), actually leads the workshops. The Basie bandmen listen to the school's band play a couple of charts, then break up into individual sections to go over the charts and to answer questions.

“Just being able to read the charts doesn't do it because a lot of what's written in there is not the way we play it,” explains trombonist Bill Hughes, who joined the band in the mid-'50s after graduating from Howard University. “That makes it really difficult if a guy doesn't have big ears and a good-time feel, and those are things that are very hard to teach in the schools.”

In the clinic at Howard University, associate professor Fred Irby III, who directs

**“Basie's Band is loose. They can be loose because they are good listeners.”**

made a hit out of it—illustrates how the success of the band was based on Basie. “That was one of the biggest lessons I ever had in my life about tempo, about what tempo meant,” recalls Quincy Jones, who was there when the band first played Hefti's chart. “At that slower tempo, you could hear every voicing in those big, fat chords—it was just like the band was walking on eggshells. It wasn't a matter of then taking

the jazz ensemble and teaches trumpet, sat in on Byron Stripling's workshop. “He answered questions about playing the trumpet, how to develop greater range, working on your sound, and maintaining the skills you already have,” recalled Irby. “He also stressed that a lead-trumpet player really has to be a jazz player. Most arrangers write jazz licks for the section and if you don't know the poetry of jazz its hard to play the arrangements. All the players should learn to improvise, that's where the feeling of the music comes from, that's how you lift the music off the page rather than having notes inhibit you from playing.”

“Playing a good lead comes from knowing solos. Someone who has had a heavy college training but hasn't listened to the older styles, they come into the band with a really stiff concept,” adds Stripling. “When I came in, I knew the guys the Basie guys had listened to, like Louis Armstrong and Roy Eldridge—people who had a real basis of swing to their playing. That's something we stress in the clinics—to study the tradition of swing. And you do that by listening to solos.”

After the work in the individual sections, the band gets back together to play the charts under the direction of Dennis Wilson, a former teacher himself as well as a trombonist. He listens to the dynamics, phrasing, and articulation. The same thing the leader of the Basie band listens for whether it is the current director, Frank Foster, his deceased predecessors Thad Jones and Eric Dixon, or The Chief himself. And that is how the band keeps the spirit in the music, how they maintain The Basie Way—listening to each other for the things that Basie taught them to listen for.

DB

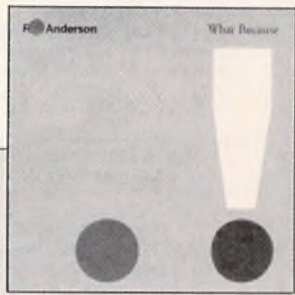
Duffy Jackson of the Count Basie Orchestra working with Annalee Gunlicks at a workshop at the 1990 New Trier High School Jazz Festival, Winnetka, Ill.



USA TODAY

# record & cd reviews

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



## RAY ANDERSON

**WHAT BECAUSE**—Gramovision R2 79453: ALLIGATORY CROCODILE; LET'S FALL IN LOVE; THE WARM-UP; INTRO.; I'M JUST A LUCKY SO-AND-SO; WHAT BECAUSE; OFF PEAK; RAVEN-A-NING; WALTZ FOR PHOEBE. (56:30 minutes)

**Personnel:** Anderson, trombone; Alon Jaffe, guitar; John Hicks, piano; Mark Dresser, bass; Pheeroan akLaff, drums.

★★★★

*What Because*, trombonist Ray Anderson's fifth album as a leader, is painted in broad strokes. It's a portrait of the artist—as an abstract expressionist, as a funky swamp creature, as a surrealist crooner, as a wild man with a horn, and more. It's got rollicking good humor and some kicking grooves. It has sweet, poignant moments and at other times, just veers off into sheer space and sound. Mostly, it's got Anderson, whose forceful musical scope ties together this energetic collection of his own compositions and two marvelously revamped standards.

Anderson's sound covers a wide range—muscular, swift, soulful, otherworldly. He growls, he shimmers, he whirls into the upper register with ease. He plays around with multiphonics (playing more than one note simultaneously) or any effect that will feed his purpose. He virtually sings on the instrument, or in the case of "I'm A Lucky So-and-So," sounds like a trombone while he's singing.

Like *Blues In The Bone*, Anderson's last album, the music demands a lot from the other players. There are some bristling ensemble passages on Anderson's quirkier tunes. "The Warm-up" or "Raven-a-ning," a fitting tribute to Monk. Drummer Pheeroan akLaff is perfection itself, snapping and crackling on Anderson's funky grooves or subsiding into gentle impressionism. Pianist John Hicks is present on several cuts, adding a particular glow to the album's most haunting tunes. "Let's Fall In Love," played here in a sultry 5/4, and Anderson's beautiful ballad, "Waltz For Phoebe." Both bassist Mark Dresser and guitarist Alan Jaffe ride with all the rhythmic twists and turns in Anderson's originals, and complement the album's varied moods with their respective spectrum of timbres.

This lively recording does have its weaknesses. Some of Anderson's originals could be more finely honed. His own exuberance seems to compel him to put too many ideas into one composition, or even into one eight-bar section. At times, this seems to leave the improviser groping for just the right idea, resulting in several overly-long solos. But on the whole, the album's tremendous vitality keeps drawing the

listener in—Anderson's steady flow of surprises is irresistible. (reviewed on CD)

—stephanie stein



## LOOSE TUBES

**OPEN LETTER**—Editions EG EDED 55: SWEET WILLIAMS; CHILDREN'S GAME; STICKLEBACKS; BLUE; THE LAST WORD; A; ACCEPTING SUITES FROM STRANGERS; OPEN LETTER TO DUDU PUKWANA.

**Personnel:** Eddie Parker, flutes; Dai Pritchard, clarinets; Iain Ballamy, alto and soprano saxes; Steve Buckley, alto and soprano saxes, penny whistle; Mark Lockheart, tenor and soprano saxes; Tim Whitehead, tenor sax; Julian Arguelles, baritone and soprano saxes; Dave DeFries, trumpet, flugelhorn, percussion; Chris Batchelor, trumpet; Lance Kelly, trumpet, flugelhorn; John Ecocott, trumpet, flugelhorn, bugle; Richard Pywell, alto trombone, tenor trombone; John Harborne, tenor trombone, flugelbone; Steve Day, tenor trombone, euphonium; Ashley Slater, bass trombone, tuba; Dave Powell, tuba; Django Bates, keyboards, tenor horn; John Parricelli, guitar; Steve Berry, acoustic bass; Steve Arguelles, drums; Thebe Lipere, percussion.

★★★½

The British music press has been crowing about this 21-piece aggregation since its 1985 debut, and rightly so. This band of renegades, bored by the stodgy convention of British big bands and tired of the standard repertoire, has pushed forward with verve, skill, and not a small dose of irreverence to create a startlingly original book. Role models include the Gil Evans Orchestra, the Carla Bley ensembles, a touch of Mike Gibbs' big band, perhaps a bit of George Russell's Orchestra and Jaco Pastorius' Word Of Mouth big band. And Monty Python.

Picture the George Gruntz big band with a sense of humor.

Much of the wry stylings of Loose Tubes can be directly traced to Django Bates, the accomplished young pianist and principal composer for the band. His pieces tend to be ambitious suites that segue smoothly between seemingly disparate genres. On his "Accepting Suites From Strangers," for instance, the band shifts from a repeating Phil Glassian *Einstein On The Beach* motif to a salsa section with Ashley Slater's trombone dancing on top, then on to a gospel segment (reminiscent of some of Bill Lee's soundtrack work for *Do The Right Thing*), a chunk of 4/4 walking with Iain Ballamy's alto blowing white-hot, followed by a token stab at big band precision and a final quote from

Coltrane's "Giant Steps." Oh yes, and somewhere in there is a tribute (parody?) to Tommy Dorsey's trademark use of band vocal choruses, done up in absurdly humorous Pythonesque fashion.

On another ambitious Bates piece, "Sweet Williams," you can just sense a sly, mischievous grin creep across the irreverent composer's face as the band gradually deconstructs the engaging theme into anarchic discord.

Bassist Steve Berry, the group's other prolific composer, contributes only one tune here, the very Gil-inspired "Blue," featuring a robust soprano solo by Julian Arguelles. And trombonist John Harbone provides the album's other compositional highlight with "A," a moody tone poem with some beautiful Miles-inspired soloing by trumpeter John Batchelor. There's a looseness in the ensemble on this piece, particularly in the drumming of Steve Arguelles, that creates an organic, breathing feel, as opposed to the slicker, locked-in offerings like Eddie Parker's funky "Children's Game" or Chris Batchelor's paean to West African pop, "Sticklebacks."

It's a democratic aggregation. Everybody gets a chance to contribute compositions in Loose Tubes. An album's worth of material by Bates and Perry probably would've merited another star, but then there's band morale to think of. As is, *Open Letter* is infinitely fresher, hipper, and more fun than anything produced by the U.K.'s other celebrated big band, the Charlie Watts Orchestra. This eclectic album, along with the recent Verve compilation, *Acid Jazz And Other Illicit Grooves*, suggests that a new renegade spirit is brewing among young jazz musicians in the U.K. (reviewed on LP)

—bill milkowski



## SINÉAD O'CONNOR

**I DO NOT WANT WHAT I HAVEN'T GOT**—Chrysalis F2 21759: FEEL SO DIFFERENT; I AM STRETCHED ON YOUR GRAVE; THREE BABIES; THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES; BLACK BOYS ON MOPEDS; NOTHING COMPARES 2U; JUMP IN THE RIVER; YOU CAUSE AS MUCH SORROW; THE LAST DAY OF OUR ACQUAINTANCE; I DO NOT WANT WHAT I HAVEN'T GOT. (51:10 minutes)

**Personnel:** O'Connor, voice, acoustic guitar, keyboards, drum programming; Marco Pirroni (cut 4), electric guitar; Dave Munday (8), acoustic guitar, piano; Andy Rourke (4, 7, 8), Jah Wobble (9), bass; John Reynolds, drums (4, 8, 9); Steve Wickham, fiddle (2).

★★★★½

On 1987's *The Lion And The Cobra*, Irish singer

Sinéad O'Connor showed her capacity to rant and rage, with eloquence ever underscoring her anger. Her second album, a remarkable pop achievement, expands her range yet further and strikes new ground in terms of poise and seamless eclecticism. Snatches of punk mindset, white rap, and pop sweetness all function under the general rubric of folk music—in the best, most pan-global sense.

O'Connor's voice—at once potent and stark—has its full emotive measure laid out on Prince's "Nothing Compares 2U," with spare drum-machine pulse, heavenly backup vocals, and an ethereal bed of synth pads. She sings of the void in the wake of a departed lover, in a tone of pain on the mend. An especially inspired synthesis occurs on "I Am Stretched," as O'Connor's ruminative Celtic melody drapes itself on a lean hip-hop beat: a grafting of two poetic traditions, from hoary Irish folklore to the modern American inner city.

The album circles back to the Irish folk paradigm for the plaintive title song, an a cappella reverie of acceptance and appreciation of beauty, a psychic calm after the gnashing of teeth. And that, summarily, is her story thus far. (reviewed on CD) —*Josef Woodard*



## CECIL TAYLOR

**IN FLORESCENCE**—A&M CD 5286: *J.*; *PETHRO VISITING THE ABYSS*; *SAITA*; *FOR STEVE MCCALL*; *IN FLORESCENCE*; *ELL MOVING TRACK*; *SIRENS 1/3*; *ANAST IN CRISIS* *MOUTHFUL OF FRESH CUT FLOWERS*; *CHARLES AND THEE*; *ENTITY*; *LEAF TAKEN HORN*; *CHAL CHUATLICHUE GODDESS OF GREEN FLOWING WATERS*; *MORNING OF DEPARTURE*; *FENG SHUI*. (61:24)

**Personnel:** Taylor, piano, prepared piano, voice; Greg Bendian, percussion, voice; William Parker, bass, percussion, voice.

★ ★ ★ ★

**THE EIGHTH**—hat ART CD 6036: *CALLING IT THE EIGHTH*; *CALLING IT THE NINTH*. (69:00)

**Personnel:** Taylor, Bosendorfer piano; Jimmy Lyons, alto saxophone; William Parker, bass; Rashid Bakr, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**IT IS IN THE BREWING LUMINOUS**—hat ART CD 6012: *IT IS IN THE BREWING LUMINOUS*. (69:52)

**Personnel:** Taylor, Bosendorfer piano; Jimmy Lyons, alto saxophone; Ramsey Ameen, violin; Alan Silva, bass; Jermone Cooper, drums, balophone; Sunny Murray, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

*In Florescence* is a subtle watershed in Cecil Taylor's discography, but not because it is his

first recording for an American label in over a decade. This hermetic trio program employs the somber lyricism and relatively short durations that have distinguished Taylor's solo programs beginning with *Fly! Fly! Fly! Fly! Fly!* The results are often stirring and sensuous, but occasionally perplexing. Rather than forward the rhythmic compression and release that marked the Candid sides, the unit structures of the '60s and early '70s, or the streamlined propulsion of the last Lyons-era Units—documented on *It Is In The Brewing Luminous* and

*The Eighth* (both reissues from '81 and '86, respectively)—Taylor, for the most part, focuses on deliberate, often introspective exposition of such familiar materials as minor-second motifs and cue-like tremolos.

At its best, Taylor's tact yields moments of the rare poignancy that made his reading of "This Nearly Was Mine" for Candid a classic. The unaccompanied solo, "Ell Moving Track," brilliantly builds harmonic tension, its resolution repeatedly suspended with simmering, triplet-based chordal patterns. On "Charles And



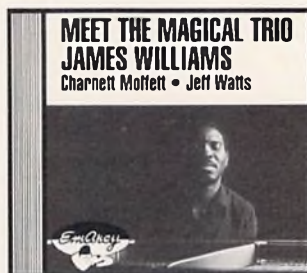
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Thee," the dramatic tug-and-pull between left- and right-hand octaves is punctuated by pedal-boasted groundswells and riveting clusters. After an initial rush of activity, "J," a tribute to Jimmy Lyons, downshifts with a heartstring-yanking balladic statement in the vein of the opening of *Luminous*.

Yet, other signature devices, particularly the repetition of an abrupt phrase in different registers, are occasionally, and uncharacteristically, static. This is partially due to the shadow roles of William Parker and Greg Bendian, who consistently embellish Taylor's statements without transforming them. On *The Eighth*, in

contrast, Parker is neck-and-neck with Taylor, Lyons, and the Charles-like bluntness of Rashid Bakr's attack, pushing the envelope with aplomb. Additionally, Taylor chooses to sparingly wring the bluesiness from his locked-hands techniques, or the implied barrelhouse swagger from his bass lines, which gives his performance on *Luminous* its zest. He also foregoes the dizzying, sustained high-velocity passages that distinguish *The Eighth*.

In *Florescence* pales next to *Luminous* and *The Eighth*, but only because of its ingrown agenda. The inconsequential work of Ramsey Ameen aside, *Luminous* is an inspired reunion

of three decades of Units, highlighted by Alan Silva's gliding and slashing through the mix, and Sunny Murray's tempering of his breakthrough "sound of breaking glass" approach with discernibly swinging pulses. *The Eighth* documents an edition of the Unit that's not only among Taylor's finest ensemble recordings, but also contains what is arguably Jimmy Lyons' best work. Lyons' capacity for creating 20-minute solos of unflagging energy and imagination, documented here, was a defining element in Taylor's music during Lyons' lifetime. In *Florescence* suggests that it remains so even now. (reviewed on CD) —bill shoemaker

## A HANDFUL OF KEYS

by Fred Bouchard

**T**he surnames of three of the best of the current crop of young pianists out there peckin' all begin with RO: Rosnes, Roberts, and Rollings. Besides today's mandatory top-notch technique, all three have a lot going for them: they share unerring taste in sidemen, maturity to pace themselves, big enough ears and small enough egos to appreciate and play the music of those around them, whether the compositions of peers and predecessors or the on-the-spot ideas of colleagues on the date.

**Renee Rosnes**, a young Canadian (see "Riffs" Feb. '90) who debuts on her eponymous release (Blue Note CDP 7-93561-2; 46:43 minutes: ★★★★★½), rubs balm in jaded ears. She offers exquisite balances of delicacy and power, witty and weighted ideas, assertiveness and deference. Her guests are saxophonists Branford Marsalis, Ralph Bowen, and Wayne Shorter, and there's a final duet between Rosnes and Herbie Hancock, an idol she does not approach with undue awe. It is not the presence of top players playing beautifully that makes this date, but the pluck and bright ability of the leader to spin out new melodies and to pace and vary her date. The players fit into her frames of reference flawlessly. Repeatedly delightful. (reviewed on CD)

On the heels of success—his debut album earning top honors nationally—pianist **Marcus Roberts** has his sober, young band step back, listen hard, and reapproach tradition with tender conviction and refreshing probity. On *Deep In The Shed* (RCA/Novus 3078-2; 42:20:

★★★★★). Roberts develops ripe ideas all the way through his spacious pieces, creates off-shoot melodies, plays cat-and-mouse with bar lines and modes, inspires pals. All hands blow spare and sure. Sultry, mutant blues stretch and seep, fertile as the Delta: Nawlins-on-the-Nile

"Nebuchadnezzar" has warm growl and plunger trombone by Wycliffe Gordon and Herlin Riley launches the cowbell habanera on the title tune, which ends with a pouncing Roberts cadenza. The Marsalis

connection thrives: Wynton purrs the pseudonymous, eponymous "E. Dankworth" and Delleayo produces with jubilant austerity. (reviewed on CD)

**Matt Rollings'** piano education was unique in that he studied with two acclaimed jazz-method teachers, Alan Swain (Evanston, Ill.) and John Mehegan (Westport, Conn.). The background shows in his debut trio date, *Balconies* (MCA C-6357: ★★★★★). He starts off loosely with Monty Alexander-ish fastballs, but soon throws a curve (a 1948 Lee Konitz bop hit, "Subconscious-Lee") then a changeup (Bix Beiderbecke's written-out, post-Debussy "Candlelight"). Plenty of humor and grace for three (with John Patitucci and Carlos Vega) with no horns to lean on. Clean and clear-minded. (reviewed on cassette)

**Kenny Werner** sends forth a trio date, too, one nigh a decade coming, on this CD belatedly *Introducing The Trio* (Sunnyside SSC 1038-D; 68:43: ★★★★★). The lone old dog in this litter of pups, Werner's labored in the vineyard of high-profile bands (Archie Shepp, Eddie Gomez, Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra and combos). Surprises pop softly: stylistic wanderlust reflecting a zillion gigs, tributes (and ties) to Herbie Nichols and Bill Evans. Werner owns more chops and brains than most pianists; you probably haven't heard "Nardis" and "I Hear A Rhapsody" so thoroughly rethought, if not rekindled. Sunnyside has done much with smart pianists (like Kirk Lightsey and Harold Danko), yet Werner's trio plays a little closer to the vest here than they have live. Werner hardly raises his voice to make subtle points, couching his logic in neat vamps, sinewy angular lines, dizzying rhythmic double entendres. If Rizzo Harris and Tom Rainey, on bass and drums respectively, sound inhibited, turn up the volume and rehear the delicate interplay on "Requiem" and "Time Remembered": they are full partners in this exotic cookery. Tantalizing, if recherché. (reviewed on CD)

For the others: **Vernell Brown Jr.** plies familiar and safe waters of funk in his star-studded debut, *A Total Eclipse* (A & M 5305: ★★). It's hard to hear what individuality a kid—even one who placed third in the 1988 Monk Competition, is a Musicfest U.S.A. grad, and a DB Student Music Award winner—may have when he's eclipsed by the production razzle-dazzle of fancy charts, stylistic whirlgigs, dross

tunes, bigwig ideas. On "August," a harmless, faceless funk ballad, the very volume of his tinkly piano is made (by some sort of phaser) to shimmer like heat waves on city asphalt, in and out with Ernie Watts' keening soprano lines, as Vinnie Colaiuta tacks down slow metronomic rimshots. When Brown overlays ponderous french horn voicings, the heat gets oppressive. Thus a simple idea complicates itself, pop-jazz turns to juke junk, and nobody wins, least of all a youthful, probing artist. A&M even credits hair and clothing—like a Hollywood production! *Eclipse* is not total, as glimmers of bright piano poke through the murk. (reviewed on cassette)

**Neils Ian Doky** hails from Danish/Thai lineage, but his piano on *Dreams* (Milestone M-9178: ★★★★★½) is largely cut from the middle-Keith Jarrett tradition, blending European classical formalism with precision new age patterning and bluesy whimsy. Trio tracks with kid brother Christian Minh's bass and Adam Nussbaum's drums underline these tendencies, while longer blowing tracks (with John Scofield, Bob Berg, and Randy Brecker) place him in original, hard-sock grooves where his considerable ensemble skills (big-boned modal comping, flamboyant noodling over horns) stick to the ribs and show youthful mastery. Like Werner, Doky earned the stool early with Thad Jones and became a familiar figure in Boston clubs.

The ringer in the pack is **Joey De Francesco**, a lively young interpreter of the Hammond B3 organ, walking in the not-so-oft-trod footsteps of Jimmy Smith, Charles Earland, and Jack McDuff. He plays overtly bluesy, percussive piano on a track or two on *Where Were You?* (Columbia CK 45443; 59:40: ★★★★★). He's perfected the idiom's sharp verbiage: the harmonica-like screeches, burbling bass patter, chugging lock-hand chatterings, and endless sustain pedal are all in place. He's brought on board saxophone princes of swing (Illinois Jacquet) and funk (Kirk Whalum), and grooved toe-to-toe with them happily on chestnuts like "Red Top." Had he been given charts worthy of Oliver Nelson and Jimmy Smith or his fine sidemen, we'd have had a solid album, but the recording and mix are screechy and weary. The requisite organist's soulfulness may emerge in time. This is good-time music, holding little truck with cerebral concerns. (reviewed on CD) **DB**

## BIG JOE MAHER & THE DYNAFLOWS

**GOOD ROCKIN' DADDY**—Powerhouse P106CD: *GOOD ROCKIN' DADDY; CAT SCRATCHIN'; LET'S GO JUMPIN'; HOOK, LINE, AND SINKER; NO GOOD WOMAN BLUES; OKESHEMOKESHEPOP; HAND-CLAPPIN'; YOU KNOW YEAH; DON'T SEND ME FLOWERS; BLOW, MAN, BLOW; DYNAFLOW.* (37:11 minutes)

**Personnel:** Maher, drums, vocals; Tom Principato, guitar, six-string bass; Jeff Sarli, acoustic and electric bass; Little Kevin McKendree, Deanna Bogart, Daryl Davis, piano; Bruce Ewan, harmonica, Joe Stanley, Jerry Queen, tenor saxophone; Derek Huston, tenor, baritone saxophones.

★ ★ ★

## THE PALADINS

**LET'S BUZZ!**—Alligator ALC 4782 CR: *FOLLOW YOUR HEART; KEEP ON LOVIN' ME BABY; LET'S BUZZ; I DON'T BELIEVE; MERCY; UNTAMED MELODY; WHAT SIDE OF THE DOOR AM I ON?; KIDDIO; THE THING; LAWDY LAWDY MISS MARY; SNEAKIN' AROUND; PLAYGIRL; I'VE BEEN DOWN BEFORE.*

**Personnel:** Dave Gonzalez, guitar, vocals; Tom Yearsley, bass; Scott Campbell, drums.

★ ★ ★

How well does the music of two bands who make their livings in smoky r&b clubs make the translation onto disc? Pretty well, as both the Baltimore-Washington, D.C.-based Big Joe Maher and The DynafloWS and the San Diego-based Paladins serve up impressive albums of "roots rock" tunes that are full of sweat, grit, and soul. Maher relies on the jump blues tradition of the '40s to give his numbers a zip while The Paladins base their rowdy songs in an r&b mix influenced by rockabilly and swing.

Maher leads his band into an overdrive mode for most of his album. He's a blues shouter with a husky, rough-hewn voice, and he's at his best when he belts and growls out lowdown lyrics on the rocking boogie numbers. He adds extra umph in his cover of Joe Turner's "Okeshemokeshepop," which receives additional snarl thanks to Bruce Evan's hot harp solo. While the highlights are the jump blues tunes, including two rollicking originals, Maher also successfully covers other blues stylings. There's Smiley Lewis' "Hook, Line, And Sinkin'," which catches a New Orleans groove in the rumba bass line, and Floyd Dixon's "Don't Send Me Flowers," a slow tune in the West Coast blues tradition where Maher half-sings, half-talks out the plaintive, tongue-in-cheek lyrics: "So don't send me no flowers when I'm in the graveyard/Cause, baby, I can't smell a thing."

The DynafloWS are a tight band. This is especially evident on its signature piece. Albert King's Texas roadhouse blues boogie instrumental, "DynafloW." The horn section honks, Tom Principato's Telecaster solo is absolutely piercing, and Big Joe kicks in a rock-steady beat on the drums. (reviewed on CD)

While Maher puts together a crew of 10 musicians for his album, The Paladins strip down to the basics—just electric guitar, upright bass, and drums on most numbers—for its simply arranged, but intense and spontaneous r&b-based blasters. There's a strong emphasis

on Dave Gonzalez's guitar work, which ranges from sweet blues excursions on several pieces to rhythm guitar runs reminiscent of surfer music on the instrumental "Untamed Melody." The band used to specialize in rockabilly tunes, but it has expanded its scope to include blues boogie and shuffle numbers as well as songs influenced by late '50s/early '60s rock. The Paladins chug through the lowdown blues title cut, clip through the rousing r&b "Laudy Laudy Miss Mary," and stomp through the down-but-not-out "I've Been Down Before." However, the most energetic tunes are those

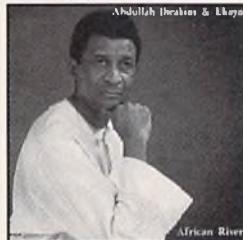
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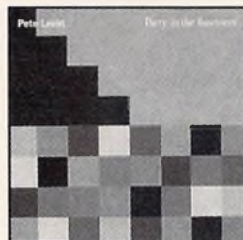
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flavored by rockabilly. The highlight is "Play-girl," which is fueled into orbit by a Tex-Mex polka beat. Like Maher's album, The Paladins' latest has "party time" written all over it. So,

roll up the carpet and crank up the V with these guys. (reviewed on cassette) (Powerhouse Records are available from Box 2455 Falls Church, VA 22042.) —dan ouellette

**GETZ SERIOUS**

by Kevin Whitehead

**"Stan Getz** the money," Lester Young is said to've observed in the early '50s. But Getz quickly evolved past mere Pres-tidigation, becoming one of the most pleasing tenor stylists of our time. A brace of (re)issues, spanning 1962 to 1989, make his case.

The earliest of these recordings really made the saxophonist's rep, and helped the world get a fix on his style: *The Girl From Ipanema: The Bossa Nova Years* (Verve 823 611-2; 4CDs, 3 hours 40:44; ★★★½). Here are the five albums Getz recorded in the years 1962 to '64, when the fad swept the country, swept up the bucks, and then was swept under the rug. (Neil Tesser's excellent notes sketch the historical context; like the box itself, they expand on the 1984 LP version of this set.)

Getz didn't know much about the "new flair" from Brazil when he made his first recording with guitarist Charlie Byrd and company—he just kept his ears open and blew over the top. (He was a likely candidate for such a job; the year before he'd winged beautifully over Eddie Sauter's string charts, on the splendid Verve album

*Focus*.) One result was the massive hit "Desafinado," which you've probably heard hundreds of times even if you don't know the title. Byrd's strumming is a bit mannered and prim, but then he's striving for authenticity—the guitar is the heart of bossa nova—while Getz is free to invent. And what inventions they are. His light touch, the way he floats across the beats and lazy melodies, obviously owe a lot to Pres. But his soft hazy sound is his own. The other albums he cut while Brazilian cool was hot vary in quality. Gary McFarland's reserved orchestral samba charts don't quite come off. The sessions with guitarists Luiz Bonfá and Laurindo Almeida are much better—the latter allows Stan the most room to stretch; improvising, he works over, elaborates on, and cycles back to simple melodic motifs. Really, as melodic invention goes, this is primo Getz. (If you're listening for his solos only, add another star to the above rating.)

Also in the box, of course, are the Getz/Gilberto sides, with husband Joao G. singing softly in Portuguese and wife Astrud handling the English translations. The original "Ipanema" was her first professional vocal, and it sounds it—her breathing is awkward, her emotional temperature beyond cool. (She steadily improved afterward, but Maria Toledo, on a few tunes

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from the Bonfa session, sings with more blood.) Yet Astrud's artlessness makes the Getz solo that follows seem that much more suave. Still, it's interesting to note that some of bossa nova's critical boosters accuse rock singers of sounding like off-the-street amateurs.

In hindsight, we can see these sides anticipate the adventures of Kip Hanrahan, Paul Simon, David Byrne, et al., bringing first- and third-world musicians together. But Getz displayed better taste—he never tried to write for the Brazilians or dictate anyone's direction except his own. As Tesser notes, Getz heard the music as a reaction against overly complex writing and free jazz dissonance. It was antithetical to both, with its vamping pretty chords, cookie-cutter syncopated drum parts, and simple horizontal melodies. But the limits were so narrow, the albums began to sound redundant, and not only because a few tunes were recorded more than once. The audience burned out on the bossa pretty quick—such is the way with fads. (Complex orchestrations and free improvisation are still going fine, thanks.) But by the time it was all over, nobody was sneering at Stan Getz.

Jump ahead to 1971 for a radically different date: Getz live in London, with the Paris-based trio of organist Eddy Louiss, guitarist Rene Thomas, and drummer Bernard Lubat: *Dynasty* (Verve 839 117-2; 2 CDs, 1 hour 33:18: ★★★★★½). Getz is nobody's idea of an organ-group tenor player, but he plays with uncommon grit: almost honking once or twice on the whisper-to-a-scream samba "Our Kind Of Sabi"; spitting notes from his horn on Thomas' uptempo "Theme For Emmanuel." Stan's ballad sense and melancholy side are exploited as well. Louiss' playing is praiseworthy for what he doesn't do as well as what he does. He downplays the boogaloo clichés and washing-machine sonorities—his style's full but not in your face. And check out his fancy-footwork rapid basslines on "Sabi." Thomas' work is clean and bluesy, if not in the mode of his idol Django (who wasn't an organ-combo kind of guitarist). Lubat raps out tasty ride-cymbal phrases. Stan's swaggering quote from "It Don't Mean A Thing (If It Ain't Got That Swing)" on the title track is his tip of the hat to the reliable trio. *Dynasty's* an undersung gem of the Getz discography.

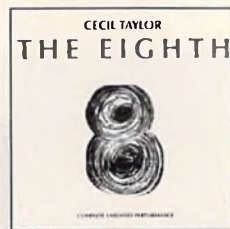
By 1987—when caught at the Club Montmartre in Copenhagen for *Anniversary* (EmArcy 838 769-2; 69:51: ★★★★★½)—his tone had deepened a little bit, but at 60 he was playing as elegantly as ever. If anything, his ballads ("I Can't Get Started," Strayhorn's "Blood Count") may be even richer and more beautiful. The rhythm section's beyond reproach, as Johnny Mandel's opener "El Cahon" quickly proves: Kenny Barron's piano everywhere demonstrates his rhythmic and lyrical mastery; Rufus Reid's bass solo sings; Victor Lewis subtly varies his *ching-ching* cymbal patterns to keep them lively. The band achieves synergetic excellence: on

"Stella," Kenny's starlit punctuating chords and Getz's spinning-top phrases feed on each other. Assembling four talented musicians doesn't guarantee great music, but on this gig everything clicks—it's as lustrous a mainstream date as I've heard in awhile. Wish I'd been there.

1983's *The Stockholm Concert* (Gazell CD 1013; 44:44: ★★★★★) was first issued by Sweden's Sonet, and is a sequel to Sonet/Gazell's Getz/Chet Baker *Line For Lyons*, recorded the same evening. (Chet's not on this volume.) It's nearly *Anniversary's* equal. The quartet includes Victor Lewis (splendid again) and bassist George Mraz, who's not ruthlessly over-amped as he is these days. Pianist Jim McNeely's rolling lines and relaxed swing magnificently reinforce Stan's gifts—this concert makes the case that we don't prize McNeely enough. The tenorist feathers through an emotionally complex "We'll Be Together Again," but it's topped by "Blood Count," even more moving than in Copenhagen. Getz invests Strayhorn's vision of death with melancholy resignation and courageous resolve, both.

Getz is featured guest on Helen Merrill's *Just Friends* (EmArcy 842 007-2; 44:49: ★★★★★), where they're backed by pianist Joachim Kühn, bassist J. F. Jenny-Clark, and drummer Daniel Humair. Most of the tunes are from the standard songbook: "Yesterdays," "It Never Entered My Mind," "Baby Ain't I Good To You." (The latter's one of three duets for Merrill and saloon pianist Torrie Zito.) As usual these days, the singer is most comfortable at the middle of her range, and favors emotional restraint (though her vocal timbre is more full and resonant than, say, Astrud Gilberto's). The mobile tenorist weaves his lines around her, wafting through the music in a way that may recall his bossa nova days. Getz has the good taste not to upstage Merrill, and their thin vibratos almost match. Still, to these ears it's a bit of a mismatch; Stan sounds held back. (Tenor and band take off on a breakneck "Don't Mean A Thing.") Joe Raposo's "(It's Not Easy) Bein' Green" works for Kermit the Frog, and Van Morrison did a killer version, but the Merrill/Zito take just sounds precious.

*Apasionado* (A&M 5297: ★★★★★) almost brings us full circle to the bossa nova sides—but not quite. Arranger/composers Eddie de Barrio and Herb Alpert tack down shuffling samba carpets for Getz to strut over—Oscar Castro-Neves' guitar is prominently featured—and Stan's "Ipanema" quotes on the title track show he can take a hint. But the idea misfires. The twinkly synths and fake strings (and postdubbed horns) are meant to swaddle Getz's tenor; instead, his ever-handsome sound underscores the backdrops' polyester textures. The stretched-out compositions aren't very stimulating harmonically, either—"Espanola"'s progression comes off like a parody of flamenco. Getz sounds less than totally involved. But his usual standard is so high, his solos still earn this overproduced fizzle its rating. (reviewed on cassette) **DB**



## CECIL TAYLOR

**THE EIGHTH**—hat Art 2036: *CALLING IT THE 8TH* 1-III; *CALLING IT THE 9TH*.

**Personnel:** Taylor, Bösendorfer piano; Jimmy Lyons, alto saxophone; William Parker, bass; Rashid Bakr, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

*The Eighth* is the complete 1982 Freiburger Jazztage performance from which an edited version, *Calling It The 8th* (hat Musics 3508), was released in 1983. Since this is the only recording issued to date of a particularly striking edition of Taylor's Unit, the release of *The Eighth* reconfirms the shamefully inadequate documentation of a national musical treasure.

It is understandable that Gary Giddins should, in his *Village Voice* review, suggest that producer Werner Uehlinger be questioned for his handling of this material; few of Taylor's listeners can afford to indulge in the redundancy of both sets. But what, then, would Giddins prescribe for American producers, whose reissue programs he consistently praises, for failing to record new Taylor material for almost a decade? The handling of this excellent concert recording, apparently a mixture of marketing convenience and an archival urge, is somewhat beside the point. The point is that we only had to wait three years for the original, a mere wink of the eye in the reissue racket.

The edited version of *Calling It The 8th* proves to be less of a cut-and-paste proposition than expected, the only excision being approximately 25 minutes following the opening vocal chant Taylor's extended trio passage, which details his rigorous rapport with William Parker and Rashid Bakr, actually succeeds another, more lightning-paced exposition, that is sandwiched by two arguably definitive Jimmy Lyons solos. Still, the editing radically altered the piece's structure, and truncated Lyons' central role.

Both albums have the unedited performance of *Calling It The 9th*, which now seems like a tentative afterthought. Despite its appreciable qualities (including fits-and-starts cadences, plaintive melodic contours, and ruminative pacing), its 11-minute duration is barely time for the Unit to bring the material to the boiling point. As demonstrated by *Calling It The 8th*, it is somewhere beyond this boiling point that Taylor's most potent magic takes hold.

With the untimely death of Jimmy Lyons—a loss that becomes greater with time—*The Eighth* assumes larger proportions. His energy and invention is boundless on this recording, and the restoration of his aforementioned solos is reason enough to seek this album out. Hopefully, hat Art will reissue the remainder of its sizable portion of Lyons' work as a leader, as well.

—bill shoemaker

MAY 1987 DOWN BEAT 27

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## JOHN ZORN/NAKED CITY

**NAKED CITY**—Elektra/Nonesuch 79238: *BATMAN; THE SICILIAN CLAN; YOU WILL BE SHOT; LATIN QUARTER; A SHOT IN THE DARK; REANIMATOR; SNAGGLEPUSS; I WANT TO LIVE; LONELY WOMAN; IGNEOUS EJACULATION; BLOOD DUSTER; HAMMERHEAD; DEMON SANCTUARY; OBEAH MAN; UJAKU; FUCK THE FACTS; SPEEDBALL; CHINATOWN; PUNK CHINA DOLL; N.Y. FLAT TOP BOX; SAIGON PICKUP; THE JAMES BOND THEME; DEN OF SINS; CONTEMPT; GRAVEYARD SHIFT; INSIDE STRAIGHT.* (55:12 minutes)

**Personnel:** Zorn, alto saxophone; Bill Frisell, electric guitar; Wayne Horvitz, keyboards; Fred Frith, electric bass; Joey Baron, drums; Yamatsuka Eye, occasional vocals.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

Naked City is a bar band. They get raunchy,

play covers, do a little of everything, and don't take themselves too seriously. They could play at a wedding—say, Dutch Schultz's wedding.

You know Zorn's m.o.—disparate vernacular musics are diced up and slammed together. "N.Y. Flat Top Box" breaks out of a c&w lope into one-second thrash episodes, then pops back into place (an apparent homage to John's old partner Eugene Chadbourne's Shockabilly). "Latin Quarter" is a rockabilly/mambo mesh with a few bars of 4/4 bop slipped in. "Lonely Woman" 's melody meets "Pretty Woman" 's rhythm track—Ornette Orbison. The disjunct bits grab your ears if you're not paying attention; it's like paging through the family Bible and finding an obscene note in grandma's handwriting.

Naked City's postmod juxtapositions operate between as well as within tracks. They follow up Zorn's garage blowout, "Batman," with a Morricone bossa *Italiano*, played straight. They line up eight (mostly) thrashing cuts in a row, timed between :08 and :38—some of which have wrenching changes within those few seconds—that function as a suite of blackout skits. And they trail that with a yearning *Chinatown* theme, done in the steamy-streets style of the *Taxi Driver* soundtrack. If Zorn's last outing, *Spy Vs. Spy*, was a study in anti-variety—all the most relentless cuts front-loaded—*Naked City* is as deftly paced as albums get.

Movie music is really their meat—they do *Delerue* and *Johnny Mandel*, but the highlight is

a Japanese spy-thriller take on Hank Mancini's "A Shot In The Dark" (radical, but check out Shirley Scott's hipster-'64 version on Impulse's *Great Scott!*). And they play Monty Norman's (not John Barry's) immortal James Bond theme with the respect a classic deserves.

These conceptual tours de force wouldn't be possible if Zorn (and Frisell, and Baron, and Frith—one of the rare guitarists who plays real bass) couldn't rifle through every style in the book. Horvitz merits special praise for his encyclopedic command of deliberately cheezy synth settings. He may be this wacko band's most deadpan comic. (reviewed on CD)  
—kevin whitehead



## SONNY ROLLINS

**FALLING IN LOVE WITH JAZZ**—Milestone M-9179: *FOR ALL WE KNOW; TENNESSEE WALTZ; LITTLE GIRL BLUE; FALLING IN LOVE WITH LOVE; I SHOULD CARE; SISTER.*

**Personnel:** Rollins, Branford Marsalis (cuts 1, 5), tenor saxophone; Clifton Anderson, trombone (4, 6); Jerome Harris, electric bass (1, 5), electric guitar (2-4, 6); Tommy Flanagan, piano (1, 5); Mark Soskin, piano (2-4, 6), synthesizer (6); Bob Cranshaw, electric bass (2-4, 6); Jeff Watts (1, 5), Jack DeJohnette (2, 4, 6), drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

Sonny Rollins is the undisputed heavyweight champion of the tenor. The strength of his tone alone can blow away the competition. He's also the king of thematic improvisation, a grand romantic whose horn throbs with emotion. But there's the old critical cliché that his records don't come up to his live performances. Well, this one comes close: inspired, cliché-free blowing most of the way.

When a challenge appears, as it does on the tracks with Marsalis, Rollins is devastating. Take "For All We Know." Marsalis approximates early Rollins, and Rollins bludgeons him in the trade-off of phrases. The younger tenorman fares better on "I Should Care," working with a smoother style that contrasts with, instead of imitates, the saxophone colossus.

Flanagan, who appears on these tracks, too, contrasts in a different way: impressionistic romanticism to Rollins' blunt emotionalism. A perfect match.

The other cuts are solid enough, but the band often takes a back seat. This is no new revelation, either. What is there to say after Sonny speaks? Well, on "Sister," Rollins' lone original here, almost everyone has a taste, with Anderson's J.J. Johnson-like solo copping honors. On the others, guitar interludes briefly

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supplant Rollins. But with a star of Rollins' stature, the band is always in the shadow. The star is practically undiminished on this record. (reviewed on LP) —*owen cordle*



### CECIL BROOKS III

**THE COLLECTIVE**—Muse 5377: *THE SKETCH IS THE KEY; WE'LL BE TOGETHER AGAIN* [CD CONTAINS TWO VERSIONS]; *ACE BOY (LITTLE CECE); SUNSHINE; ARE YOU REAL; WEST COAST BLUES; TEMPTATION.* (49:15 minutes)

**Personnel:** Brooks, drums; Greg Osby, alto, soprano saxophones; Gary Thomas, tenor saxophone; Geri Allen, piano; Lonnie Plaxico, bass.

★ ★ ★ ★

### MICHELE ROSEWOMAN

**CONTRAST HIGH**—Enja 79607: *COMMIT TO IT; PANAMBULA; OF ALL; THE DREAM #1; THE SOURCE; AKOMADO; SAME'S DIFFERENCE; CONTRAST HIGH; DREAM FRAGMENT.* (53:21)

**Personnel:** Rosewoman, piano, vocal, synthesizer; Greg Osby, alto, soprano saxophones; Gary Thomas, tenor saxophone, flute; Lonnie Plaxico, bass, electric bass; Cecil Brooks III, drums; Eddie Bobe, percussion (cut 4).

★ ★ ★ ★

Two almost-identical quintets, two very different albums. The Osby-Thomas-Plaxico nucleus hails from DeJohnette's Special Edition, but neither group sounds like that band, either. Brooks' album is the most straightahead setting yet for the hot Brooklyn crowd. (True, Gary is Baltimore-based, not M-BASEd, but he and old chum Greg team up so often and share so much, they're the Al and Zoot of the new jazz.) *The Collective* should—but probably won't—silence conservatives who think players under 40 who have the audacity to create their own styles can't swing, play changes, or get bluesy. Aside from Osby's involute "Sketch," Brooks' smart calypso "Ace Boy" (where Thomas burns), and Cecil's near-reggae "Sunshine," the tunes are standards or blowing tunes. Benny Golson's brisk "Real" displays the saxophonists' similar harmonic approaches, but Nacio Herb Brown's Latin shuffle, "Temptation," is energized by the contrast between Osby's slink and Thomas' grit. Osby's luminous on Frankie Laine's (sic) lovely theme, "We'll Be Together Again." Better yet, there isn't a lead-footed funk groove (the backbeats on Wes Montgomery's "Blues" notwithstanding) or sax-obscuring pitchrider within earshot. *The Col-*

*lective's* title is too self-effacing. Brooks' guidance makes it something distinctive: a '60s-style blowing date that doesn't sound atavistic.

Plaxico pops a string or two on *Contrast High*, but Rosewoman's less interested in funk than in adding West African and Latin strains to angular and rhythmically asymmetric new New York jazz. It's her best album yet, despite her wobbly vocal on the loungey "Of All," where she noodles on B3-ish synth, too. She makes up for it with her chant of the traditional Dahomeyan melody, "Akomado"; her superb arrangement boasts snugly-fitting syncopated lines. Like "Commit To It," it's in the pocket

without sounding clichéd or straitjacketed. Rosewoman's crisp attack owes a lot to Latino piano, but its sound doesn't. She knows eclecticism needn't imply a lack of imagination.

Rosewoman has a reputation as an especially demanding leader, who writes all-but-impossible saxophone parts and plays too much piano behind solos. But if her music seems overdetermined to some, that's how she gets exactly what she's looking for. And, as on Brooks' date, her distinctive sidfolk show they're flexible and accommodating enough to realize her vision. (reviewed on CD)

—*kevin whitehead*

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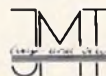
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**EPIC PIANO**

by Art Lange

**A** recent avalanche of **Cecil Taylor** recordings serves to remind us of certain things that shouldn't require prompting: of the longevity of his rich, variegated recording career (his debut on disc was 35 years ago); of the depth and breadth of his creative abilities and attitudes; of the appreciation for his art outside of the United States.

By any measure, *Cecil Taylor In Berlin '88* (★★★★★) is a monumental achievement.

(Issued by Berlin's Free Music Productions [FMP] and available by mail directly at Behaimstrasse 4, 1000 Berlin 10, West Germany, or from North Country Distributors, Cadence Bldg., Redwood, NY 13679. There is no catalog number given for the 11-CD box, though the individual CDs are numbered, and timed, as follows: 48:15 minutes/73:49/74:13/63:25/73:44/69:41/58:51/63:48/61:31/62:01/74:43.) Each CD documents a different concert—with different personnel—from Taylor's month-long residency. Equally as impressive as the sheer bulk of the recordings, however, is the accompanying book: 11¾" x 11¾", 187 pages, filled with gorgeous photos, musicians' statements, and six substantial essays, ranging from recital hall responses and reminiscences to fiercely analytical musical critiques—a treasure trove of information and informed speculation on Taylor's much maligned and still misunderstood music.

The music is, for the most part, magnificent, and hearing Cecil in so many contrasting settings is insightful. Most remarkable is that, despite his intransigent reputation, Taylor is flexible enough to alter his approach—sometimes subtly, sometimes radically—in order to enhance the individual talents of his collaborators. He is acutely aware of the delicate nature of group dynamics (even in a duo) and of the personalities which come into play in music of this spontaneity. Don't misunderstand; much of the music has been composed by Cecil, but in such a way that his collaborators must devise their own role within the master plan—this forms the essential give-and-take in which Cecil exults.

Five of the CDs are duos with different drummers. Günter Sommer impishly, intuitively alternates feathery brushes, metallic cymbals, woody drums, and Cecil responds with piston-like motifs and stark development. Paul Lovens' palette, too, is distinctive and the detailed intricacy of his contagious clatter rivals the pianist's. Louis Moholo tries to match Cecil with sheer strength, though there are times when he seems to be just comping. Tony Oxley's ornamental, exciting intensity skitters atop the piano's physical pummeling. Han Bennink and Cecil together are something special; though much of the immediacy of the experience is lost without seeing their interactivity, lots of dazzling fingerwork and lovely brushstroke lines—as well as cathartic climaxes—are audible.

There is also a typical solo recital of speed, strength, fantasy, and signature themes, and a 14-piece "workshop" performance where CT doesn't play piano at all, but molds a series of sketches into a sequence of peaks and valleys. For me, though, there are three indispensable performances here. One is with the 17-man (why no women? just curious) European Orchestra—the cream of Continental improvisers in a raucous, ecstatic, stately, shrewd celebration. One is a marvelously supple, concentrated trio of Taylor, lyrical Tristan Honsinger (cello), and muscular, unpredictably inventive Evan Parker (tenor

sax). And one is a duet with the inscrutable guitarist Derek Bailey, where CT is gracious and spacious. (The CDs are also available individually.)

FMP has also released, as an addendum to the West Berlin concerts, a two-CD set *In East Berlin* (FMP CD 13/14; 72:09/72:09: ★★★★★). The first CD, Cecil solo, is an epic performance—Messiaenic chords and dovetailed phrases sprinkled with poetry. The second CD, another duet with Günter Sommer, is tamer than their initial meeting.

England's Leo Records has already released a Taylor quintet *Live In Bologna* (see DB, July '88); from the same '87 tour now comes two additional offerings. *Live In Vienna* (Leo LP-408/09: ★★★★★) contains more emotional extremes than the earlier set, though it isn't recorded quite as cleanly. Thurman Barker's marimba and Leroy Jenkins' violin are tonal pluses, and their pastoral interlude on side 2 is a side of Cecil rarely encountered. A valuable interview with Spencer Richards is another bonus in this desirable set. *Tzotzil Mummies Tzotzil* (Leo LP-162: ★★½) is a bold, fiery Parisian session (though Carlos Ward's mellow flute disappoints) bracketed by chunks of Cecil's expressive poetry and glossolalia.

Finally, the leap back to 1960-'61 and the electrifying material on *The Complete Candid Recordings Of Cecil Taylor And Buell Neidlinger* (Mosaic CD 4-127: 60:14/64:17/67:50/50:09: ★★★★★) is huge and heroic. This was a period of transition for Taylor, and it's fascinating to hear him in these still relatively rigid structural forms (and in some cases, tunes), toying with tonality, suspending orthodox development for spontaneous "Irance" sections that anticipate his later custom, and carving out new directions for the future of the music single-handedly.

Since these breakthroughs were still in their gestation, it's no slight to Archie Shepp or Dennis Charles to mention their moments of insecure or uninspired playing; they had to invent their roles, after all, and this took time. Cecil's assurance, invention, and virtuosity carries the music, supported by bassist Neidlinger's gully nonconformity. Included in this compilation are the nine "classic" tunes originally released on *Candid* (or, subsequently, *Barnaby*) plus 17 ear-opening alternate takes previously unreleased or available only in Japan (or, apparently unbeknownst to Mosaic, on Neidlinger's own K<sup>2</sup>B<sup>2</sup> label).

The pair of Mercer Ellington tunes from Neidlinger's '61 date are inspired choices (as was the hiring of the courageous if mystified Clark Terry). "Jumpin' Punkins" especially walks a tightrope between the original's giddy exhilaration (and now quaint horn voicings reproduced here) and modern harmonic extravagance and formal elasticity. Cecil's comping and solos are sly, witty, extraordinary, and reveal more than from any other single source his Monk and Ellington debt. Is there anyone on Earth who could persuade him to record a program of Ellington compositions today? The prospect is breathtaking.

DB

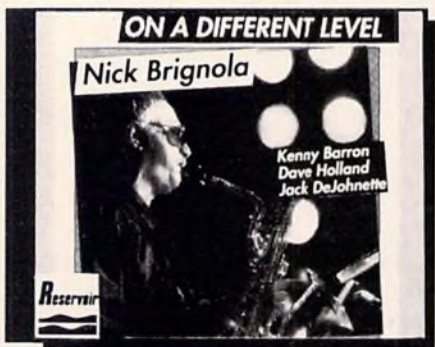
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## CHARLES LLOYD

**FISH OUT OF WATER**—ECM 1398: *FISH OUT OF WATER; HAGHIA SOPHIA; THE DIRGE; BHARATI; EYES OF LOVE; MIRROR; TELLARO.* (57:52 minutes)  
**Personnel:** Lloyd, tenor saxophone, flute; Bobo Stenson, piano; Palle Danielsson, bass; Jon Christensen, drums

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

Charles Lloyd's emerged—again (see "Profile" p. 48). *Fish Out of Water* attests to the rectitude and purposefulness of his long-term musings. It's music of quiet joy, a jazz seventh heaven, not at all an emetic new age indulgence. His playing, varied just enough in rhythm, enfolds the modern soul of the tenor saxophone, wrapping traces of Coltrane, Stitt, and Rollins together with his own wise storytelling voice. He burrows to the essential core of his songs. Only the CD bonus track "Tellaro" seems vacuous, his mountaintop-serene flute an emotional cipher.

Pianist Bobo Stenson's delicate work lacks the impressive presence of Lloyd's contributions, sometimes sounding a bit twee and over-cultivated; but that's not to suggest the Scandinavian lacks for imagination or feeling. Palle Danielsson on bass and drummer Jon Christensen—two more Northmen—are models of constancy. And ECM mainstay Jan Erik Kongshaug's expert engineering gives the music additional luminescence. (reviewed on CD)

—frank-john hadley



## JOHNNY CLEGG & SAVUKA

**CRUEL, CRAZY, BEAUTIFUL WORLD**—Capitol C2-93446: *ONE (HU)'MAN, ONE VOTE; CRUEL, CRAZY, BEAUTIFUL WORLD; JERICHO; DELA; MOLIVA; IT'S AN ILLUSION; BOMBS AWAY; WOMAN BE MY COUNTRY; ROLLING OCEAN; WARSAW 1943 (I NEVER BETRAYED THE REVOLUTION); 'VEZANDLEBE.*

**Personnel:** Clegg, vocals, guitar; Dudu Zulu,

percussion, backing vocals; Derek De Beer, drums, backing vocals; Steve Mavuso, keyboards, backing vocals; Sotty Letwaba, bass, backing vocals; Keith Hutchinson, keyboards, saxophone, flute, backing vocals.

★ ★ ★ ★

Clegg's latest album, his third on Capitol with his interracial South African band Savuka, soars with a rich mix of pop and South African mbaqanga (township jive) music. Not only is this great dance music, but the album is an 11-song poetic celebration of the struggles for freedom and justice in Clegg's homeland. While the songs are energetic and oftentimes exhilarating, they are also filled with metaphors and images of suffering and rage. Clegg is a white who has been actively involved in the Zulu community in South Africa despite apartheid segregation laws that have landed him in jail on occasion. He is a member of three Zulu tribes and has been exploring the ebullient African amalgam of contemporary Western and traditional African music since the late '70s.

The dark sides of Clegg's songs (sung in both English and Zulu) are portrayed in the lyrics which make references to veils of tears, sharks, crooked politicians, and seas of lies. On "Jericho," Clegg sets forth the thesis that those who enslave and imprison others are themselves enslaved ("We are the prisoners of the prisoners we have taken"). There's an urgency in Clegg's vocals on "Dela" when he

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sings, "The blind bird sings to me from the cage that is my heart," and anguish in the passionate "Woman Be My Country" when he suggests taking refuge in a loved one "till my country can be mine."

Given the troubled social context of Clegg's music, you might expect melancholic pieces steeped in the blues. But, except for a bluesy guitar riff at the beginning of "Bombs Away" (a vibrant tune about the South African government's State of Emergency in 1986) and a prevailing sadness in "Warsaw 1943" (a number inspired by Polish writer Czeslaw Milosz

about the survival of friendship after ultimate betrayal), the music is buoyant and hopeful. "Rolling Ocean" is an exhilarating tribute to the perseverance of South African people, "One (Hu)Man, One Vote" is a funk-flavored call for universal suffrage in light of a brutal murder of one of Clegg's colleagues, and the title cut cooks with a percolating bass line and invigorating percussion as Clegg urges listeners in the chorus, "It's your world, so live in it!" In the midst of the suffering, Clegg expresses through his music that there is "mighty dreaming." (reviewed on cassette) —*dan ouellette*



**BOBBY WATSON & HORIZON**

**THE INVENTOR**—Blue Note B1-91915: HECKLE AND JECKLE; THE INVENTOR (FOR DAD); P.D. ON GREAT JONES STREET; THE SUN; FOR CHILDREN OF ALL AGES; DREAMS SO REAL (AMMOYAIANH); THE SHAW OF NEWARK; THE LONG WAY HOME.

**Personnel:** Watson, alto saxophone; Melton Mustafa, trumpet; Willie Williams, tenor saxophone; Benny Green, piano; Edward Simon, piano, synthesizers; Carroll V. Dashiell, Jr., bass; Victor Lewis, drums; Don Alias, percussion.

★ ★ ★ ★

On *The Inventor*, his 12th feature outing, Bobby Watson & Horizon, plus needless accessories Don Alias and Willie Williams, play with a spirited, earthy quality becoming to hard-bop but not indured to the style. Hear "Heckle And Jeckle," wherein the 36-year-old leader and ace trumpeter Melton Mustafa spar on a Pentecostal pulpit set down in a roadhouse—euphoric, sassy, bluesy. The two also make points lashing vital-not-threadbare ideas off each other on "Shaw Of Newark" (a stirring string-of-16th-notes salute to late trumpeter Woody Shaw penned by wunderbar Horizon drummer Victor Lewis). The ballad, "The Long Way Home," sees Watson's lyricism arriving via tart-toned phrasings of singular design and easeful execution.

His improvisations on five more songs from within the group—three good ones, the quasi-Getz trifle "P.D. On Great Jones Street," and a touristy Caribbean stopover titled "For Children Of All Ages"—also indicate his great technical instincts are directed by inspiration and conviction. (reviewed on LP) —*frank-john hadley*

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## BIG BANDS ON PARADE

by Jack Sohmer

**T**he only black orchestra to appear in Columbia's *Best Of The Big Bands* series is that of **Cab Calloway** (Columbia CD CK 45336; 46:39 minutes: ★★★★★), and while the leader's vocals may be an acquired taste, there



Tommy Dorsey with Cab Calloway, New York 1941.

has never been any question that his various bands, from 1930 on through the mid-'40s, have always been among the best on the scene. But it was precisely because of Cab's popularity as a showman that he was able to afford such giants as Chu Berry, Dizzy Gillespie, Hilton Jefferson, Jonah Jones, Tyree Glenn, Ike Quebec, and Milt Hinton. Highlighting this collection's earlier titles are a lot of red hot, bluesy brass work, the booting tenor of "Foots" Thomas, and the propulsive bass of Al Morgan. But a bit later on we get to hear Ben Webster, trumpeter Irving Randolph, clarinetist Garvin Bushell, and, especially, Berry and Gillespie on "Bye Bye Blues," "Pickin' The Cabbage," and "Take The 'A' Train"; unfortunately, though, Dizzy does not solo on the other Berry jams, "The Jumpin' Jive" and "F.D.R. Jones."

The first white big band to emerge during the depressed early '30s that showed even a spark of life in its arrangements was The Casa Loma Orchestra under the direction of **Glen Gray** (Columbia CD CK 54345; 49:02: ★★★★★). As did every dance band in those years, the Casa Lomans had to play a lot of dreary waltzes and dreamy ballads, but thanks to their collective love of jazz and the talents of arranger Gene Gifford, they also played many faster, hotter numbers that, if not in the same class as what Henderson and Ellington were doing, at least reached the ears and feet of the young, white college crowd. Many of the best of their flagwavers can be heard here; but however spirited and persevering they

were, their rhythm remained stiff and choppy and their soloists not yet sufficiently developed to meet the competition from other quarters.

With so many anthologies around these days, both the specialist and non-specialist collector need to know why they should buy **Benny Goodman** (Columbia CD CK 45338; 49:36: ★★★★★). The reason for both, quite clearly, should be the album's inclusion of three previously unissued alternate takes, albeit two of them—"Just You, Just Me" and "Somebody Stole My Gal"—did appear on the Swedish Nostalgia label; but the third, "I'm Nobody's Baby," seems to be a genuinely new find. The remainder of the numbers are all well-known Goodman classics from the early '40s, and feature, besides the leader, such soloists as Cootie Williams, Lou McGarity, Georgie Auld, Helen Forrest, and Peggy Lee. The arrangements by Fletcher Henderson, Jimmy Mundy, and Eddie Sauter are yet another reason why this band was at the top for so long.

In light of **Glenn Miller's** prodigious recorded output, which included more inconsequential ephemera than that of any other leader of comparable stature, we must commend producers Steve Backer and John Snyder for their judiciousness in preparing the 60-title, three-disc boxed set,

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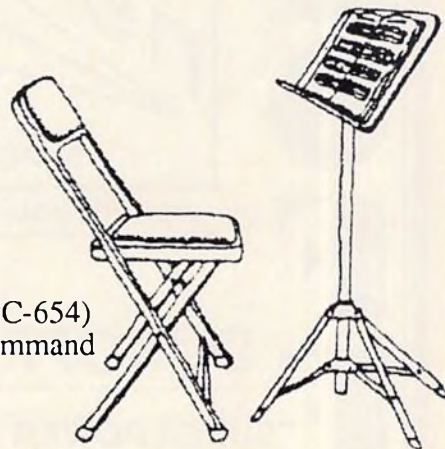
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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 41

*Glenn Miller: The Popular Recordings (1938-1942)* (RCA/Bluebird 9785-2; 188:55: ★★★★★). Even from the standpoint of jazz alone, there are many items of value: "A String Of Pearls," "Rhapsody In Blue," and "Serenade In Blue," which all contain exquisite solo statements by the Bix-inspired cornetist, Bobby Hackett; the rarely heard non-Miller-styled arrangements by Eddie Durham and Benny Carter; and the many swing numbers featuring jazz solos by trumpeters Mickey McMickle, Johnny Best, and Billy May, clarinetist Ernie Caceres, and tenormen Tex Beneke and Al Klink. Though Miller did a lot of the writing at first, as he came to concentrate more and more on business matters, he increasingly relied on his staff arrangers, Bill Finegan, Jerry Gray, and Billy May, to turn out charts in his trademarked style.

Only two years after the release of *The Thundering Herds: 1945-1947*, we find that three of the 16 titles on the new **Woody Herman** (Columbia CD CK 45340; 51:47: ★★★★★) are unnecessary duplications of the earlier album. It is not that "Apple Honey," "Goosey Gander," and "Northwest Passage" are not classics of their kind, but at CD prices, how many copies of them do we need? Among the other selections are

"Caldonia," "Laura," "Blowin' Up A Storm," and "Everywhere"; but the First and Second Herds were so important in the shaping of modern big band jazz that they deserve a comprehensive reissue program, not redundant, piecemeal handouts.

Although it took **Les Brown** (Columbia CD CK 54344; 50:31: ★★★★★) a few years longer than most to make the big time, his Band of Renown did manage to outlast virtually all of its competition from the '40s on. One prime factor in his early success was Doris Day, whose freshly scrubbed, girl-next-door image went hand-in-glove with her optimistic vocal style, as can be sampled here on "Sentimental Journey," "You Won't Be Satisfied," and "I've Got The Sun In The Morning," among others. However, Brown's arrangers—Skip Martin, Ben Homer, and Frank Comstock—were even more important in establishing the band's overall sound. Typical of their Lunceford-inspired work are "I've Got My Love To Keep Me Warm," "Just One Of Those Things," "Mexican Hat Dance," "Twilight Time," and "A Foggy Day." Also of high quality were Brown's chief soloists: trumpeter Jimmie Zito, clarinetist Abe Most, tenormen Ted Nash and Dave Pell, pianist Jeff Clarkson, and Zoot's brother, trombonist Ray Sims.

**Les & Larry Elgart** (Columbia CD CK 45337; 48:59: ★★) jointly ran a very successful dance band in the '50s and '60s that was fronted by lead altoman Larry while his less extrovertish brother led the trumpet section. Crafted by tenorman/arranger Charlie Albertine, theirs was essentially a conservative MOR approach that was popular with the milk shake and daiquiri crowds but yawnsville to those of hipper persuasion. This album is a reissue of a 1964 tribute to big band hits of the past, but in the Elgarts' leveling down to the mean point of public taste, they only succeed in trivializing their source material. For an infinitely superior treatment of the same thematic concept, check out Ellington's *Recollections Of The Big Band Era* (Atlantic 7 90043-2).

From the mid-'30s on, some of DB's most deserving targets of verbal abuse were the mickey-mouse bands, of which *Swing And Sway With Sammy Kaye* (Columbia CD CK 54342; 46:02: ★) was a prime example. Ridiculed by musicians and critics alike, Kaye's absurd, gimmick-strewn conspiracy of syrupy, simpering saxes, glissing trombones, coyly clipped trumpets, and rickety rhythm is today thankfully no longer with us, but his records can still remind us of the type of pap once gorged by a signifi-



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NEW MUSIC FROM EUROPE:  
THREE VIEWS

What is "New Music"? Since the *Ars Nova* of the 14th century, the term has been all but impossible to define, and the music harder to categorize, as, generation by generation, European composers have added an ever wider, wilder, array of outside influences to conventional practices. And the 20th century alone has seen, in theory and in use, more radical alterations and additions than over the previous 500 years combined: serialism, ethnic musics, electronics, expanded instrumental techniques, and, from America, jazz - which reintroduced improvisation to the European classical sensibility.

But what remains constant in "New Music," from century to century or, as the 20th century accelerates into the 21st, decade to decade, is the individual composer's willingness to explore uncharted territory, find fresh sonic combinations, reveal meaningful experiences in compositional energy. Among those European composers who have accepted this challenge, three of the most personal, provocative, and prismatic are Franz Koglmann, Maarten Altena, and Georg Gräwe.

Franz Koglmann's music (hat Art CDs 6003, 6018 & 6033) cannot be divorced from its environment - Vienna, a city of immense musical, philosophical, and literary traditions. Thus his compositions are haunted by apparitions - his Second Viennese School forefathers; painters and poets who see fantasy where reality ends; Freud, who sought the key to consciousness in dreams - to a noirish soundtrack of ghost waltzes, echoes of classicism, and surrealistic jazz.

The Dutch bassist/composer Maarten Altena's compositions (hat Art CD 6029) have the wiry, circuitous logic and wit of a Calder mobile - continuity hanging by an attentive thread - with a new view displayed every time inspirational winds blow a new solo. But Stravinsky's influence - both his pre-Second World War scores and post-Webern conversion - has infiltrated Altena and cohort's music, so that lean, concise structures and pungent expressions prevail.

Georg Gräwe's dynamic piano - an expansive amalgam of Charles Ives and Cecil Taylor - plants the motivic seeds for his ensemble's fireworks... (hat Art CD 6028) brilliant explosions of mercurial voicings and events. The German composer emphasizes gestural immediacy; the basic vocabulary may be 20th century European, but the heroic polyphony speaks Free Jazz, and Phil Minton's expanded vocal techniques improvise a daedalus mock-opera.

Koglmann, Altena, and Gräwe share little, stylistically, save perhaps the ability to obscure the distinction between composition and improvisation, and the desire to extend the resonances of European musical tradition into the future, each in his own way. Such imagination and integrity preserves the "new" in New Music.

- Art Lange, August 1989

hat ART: A WORK IN PROGRESS

The production has been made possible by a generous financial assistance of Swiss Bank Corporation, Basle/Switzerland. Hat Hut Records LTD, 4106 Therwil/Switzerland



cant part of the population while our nation's jazzmen went scuffling. Kaye thrived on such corny devices as spoken introductions to vocal choruses, singing song titles, audience participation, and an endless mincing parade of coquettish crooners. Along with those led by Guy Lombardo, Kay Kyser, and Blue Barron, the Kaye band epitomizes the most indefensible, negative aspects of a period otherwise regarded as a high point in American musical history.

When **Tommy Dorsey** acquired the services of former Jimmie Lunceford arranger Sy Oliver in 1939, it was to signal the beginning of a new stylistic period for his band, which had previously vacillated between semi-orchestrated dixieland and straight, danceable ballads. But with the tracks on *Tommy Dorsey: Yes, Indeed!* (RCA/Bluebird 9987-2; 68:02: ★★★★★),

the change is obvious. Oliver contributed 17 of the mostly swinging 22 charts, the others being by Paul Weston and Bill Finegan, whose "Moonlight On The Ganges" represents a healthy respite from what he had been doing for Glenn Miller just a short time before. There is so much brilliant playing on the majority of these tracks - especially "Quiet Please," "Swing High," "Deep River," "Hallelujah," "Well, Git It!," "Opus No. 1," "At The Fat Man's," and "The Minor Goes Muggin'" - that only a brief list of the main soloists must suffice: trumpeters Yank Lawson, Ziggy Elman, and Charlie Shavers, clarinetists Johnny Mince, Heinie Beau, and Buddy De Franco, tenormen Babe Russin and Don Lodice, pianist Joe Bushkin, Buddy Rich, and, as special guest on "The Minor Goes Muggin'," Duke Ellington. This is truly an action-packed set of performances. **DB**

## New Releases

(Record Companies: For listing in the monthly New Releases column, send two copies of each new release to **DOWN BEAT**, 180 West Park Ave., Elmhurst, IL 60126.)

**RCA/NOVUS:** Marcus Roberts, *Deep In The Shed*. Chet Baker, *The Italian Sessions*. Various Artists, *Novus Sampler '90*. Opafire, *Featuring Norman Engelleitner*. Mike Stevens, *set the spirit free*.

**SAVOY:** T.J. Fowler, *And His Rockin' Jump Band*. Louis Prima, *Play Pretty For The People*. Joe Wilder, *Softly With Feeling*. Various Artists: *The Ladies; The Modern Jazz Piano Album*. Dizzy Gillespie, *Dee Gee Days*. Jimmie Lunceford, *Margie*. Cal Tjader-Terry Gibbs, *Good Vibes*.

**CONCORD JAZZ:** Phil Woods Quintet + One, *Flash*. Joanne Brackeen, *Live At Maybeck Recital Hall, Vol. 1*. Dave McKenna, *Live At Maybeck Recital Hall, Vol. 2*.

**hat ART:** Vienna Art Orchestra, *Concerto Piccolo*. Fritz Hauser & Stephan Grieder, *The Mirror*. Gräwe/Reijseger/Hemingway, *Sonic Fiction*.

**WARNER BROS./Geffen:** Flim and The BB's, *New Pants*. Bela Fleck, & *The Flecktones*. Jim Horn, *Work It Out*. Kitano, *Kojiki*.

**ICHIBAN:** Lonnie Liston Smith, *Love Goddess*. Don Diego, *Give It All You've Got*. Richy Kicklighter, *In The Night*.

**BLUE NOTE/CAPITOL JAZZ:** Tony Williams, *Native Heart*. Superblue, 2. Lou Rawls with Les McCann, Ltd., *Stormy Monday*. Nancy Wilson, *But Beautiful*. Can-

nonball Adderley Quintet, *In Japan*. Benny Goodman, *In Hi-Fi*. Stan Kenton, *New Concepts Of Artistry In Rhythm*.

**VERVE/JMT:** Joyce, *Music Inside*. Bill Cosby and Friends, *Where You Lay Your Head*. Cassandra Wilson, *Jumpworld*.

**CUNEIFORM:** Biota, *Tumble*. Peter Frohmader, *Macrocosm*. David Borden/Mother Mallard, *Counterpoint 5-8*.

**AMBIANCES MAGNETIQUES:** Jean Derome/Rene Lussier, Vol. 2 *Le Retour Des Granules*. Rene Lussier, *Le Tresor de La Langue*. Les 4 Guitaristes de l'Apocalypse-Bar, *Fin de Siecle*. Robert M. Lepage, *La Traversee de La Memoire Morte*. MFC Bruire, *Le Barman a Tort De Sourire*.

**MILESTONE / LANDMARK / CONTEMPORARY / PRESTIGE:** Sonny Rollins, *Falling In Love With Jazz*. Richie Cole/Hank Crawford Quintet, *Bossa International*. Donald Byrd Sextet, *Getting Down To Business*. Various Artists, *Jazz Guitar Classics - 1953-1974*. Terry Gibbs/Buddy DeFranco, *Air Mail Special*.

**WOLF:** Various Artists: *Chicago Blues Session Vols. 1-13* (Snooky Pryor, Homesick James, Magic Slim, Johnny B. Moore, John Primer, Pinetop Perkins, et al.).

**ATLANTIC:** John Coltrane & Don Cherry, *The Avant-Garde*. Manhattan Transfer, *Mecca For Moderns*. Various Artists: *Blues Piano; Blues Vocalists; Chicago Blues; Blues Guitar*.

**OPTIMISM:** Milky Way, *Milky Way*. David Collini, *ASAP*. Janet Grice, *The Muse*.

**GRP:** Special EFX, *Just Like Magic*. Ripingtons, *Moonlighting*. Lee Ritenour, *Stolen Moments*. Guitar Workshop, *Tribute To Otis Redding*.

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**NARADA/MYSTIQUE/EQUI-NOX:** David Arkenstone, *Citizen Of Time*. Ralf Illenberger, *Heart & Beat*. Eric Tingstad/  
Nancy Rumbel, *Homeland*.

**MESA / GRAMAVISION / ENJA:** Exchange, *Between Places*. Ray Anderson, *What Because*. Franco Ambroselli, *Moves*. Too, Abdullah Ibrahim & Ekaya, *African River*. Grant Geissman, *Take Another Look*.

**ARMHOLIE:** Charlie Musselwhite, *Memphis Charlie*. Big Mama Thornton, *Ball N' Chain*. Lightnin' Hopkins, *Texas Blues*.

**TOMATO:** Dave Brubeck, *Live At Monterey*. Jon Hassell, *Earthquake Island*. Heiner Stadler, *A Tribute To Monk And Bird*. John Lee Hooker, *Alone: The Cream*. Mike Nock, *Climbing Various Artists, Texas—A Musical Celebration 150 Years*. Hanns Eisler/Bertolt Brecht, *Collaboration*. Joao Carlos Martin, *Goldberg Variations: Well-Tempered Clavier*. Harry Partch, *Revelation In The Courthouse*. Park, *Sony Terry, Black Night Road*. Jerry Lee Lewis, *Rockin' My Life Away*. Mississippi Fred McDowell, *Shake 'Em On Down*. Rocky Hill, *Texas Shuffle*.

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Nick Brignola, *On A Different Level (Reservoir)*. Don Sickler, *The Music Of Kenny Dorham (Heserovit)*. Carlos Guedes & Desvio, *Churun Meru (Oxygorn)*. Don Randi and Quest, *It's All Night, It's All Night (Head-First)*. Don Randi and Quest, *Maldib Nights (Headfirst)*. Pete Morlon, *One Big Joke (Green Linnet)*. Skylark, *All Of It (Green Linnet)*. Oliveros/Dempster/Paralotis, *Deep Listening (New Albion)*. Peggy Lee, *There'll Be Another Spring (Musicmasters)*. Ira Stein & Russel Walder, *Under The Eye (Sona Gaia)*. James Mammo, *After Forever's Gone (FM)*. James Newton, *Il Love (Jazzline)*. Final Notice/Alphonse Mouzon, *As You Wish (Jazzline)*. Various Artists, *The Best Of Teo Macero (Stash)*. Various Artists, *Iambada Brazil (Poly-dor)*. Christol Lauer, *Christol Lauer (CMP)*. Marly Fogel, *Many Bobbing Heads, At Last*. . . . (CMP). Scott Henderson and Tribal Tech, *Nomad (Relativity)*. Robin Kenyatta, *Blues For Mama Doll (Jazz Dance)*. **DB**

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**RUTGERS**  
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**1 JACK McDUFF.** "Mean To Me" (from *TOUGH 'DUFF*, Prestige) McDuff, organ; Lem Winchester, vibraphone; Jimmy Forrest, tenor sax; Bill Elliot, drums.

That's Jack McDuff. This is early Jack, too, because he's working the volume pedal. This is when he was just getting it together. That's at Rudy's [Van Gelder], though, no question about it. Is that Ben Dixon on drums? Who's on drums?

LB: Bill Elliot.

JD: Bill Elliot—I've heard of him. The tune is "Mean To Me." Jimmy Forrest on sax, Lem Winchester on the vibes. I could tell by the way he's comping. Lem is from Wilmington. I love Jack McDuff. Ten stars for this. Him and Groove Holmes have the best bass lines, but Jack started as a bass player. He played with Johnny Griffin and a lot of other cats.

**2 LARRY YOUNG.** "The Infant" (from *HEAVEN ON EARTH*, Blue Note) Young, organ; Byard Lancaster, alto sax; Herbert Morgan, tenor sax; George Benson, guitar; Edward Gladden, drums.

Sounds like Larry Young. What album is this? I don't have this one, either. Man, I've never heard these albums. Yeah, that's Larry. Larry sets the organ just like Jimmy Smith. I do, too. This is before Larry expanded into the stuff he's known for. Sounds like George Benson comping back there. I can't think of the alto player's name, but I've played with him at jam sessions a couple of times. What's the tenor player's name?

LB: Herbert Morgan.

JD: I know Herb. Herbert Morgan played with Larry on a lot of stuff. He did an album with Larry called *Mothership*. Is that Eddie Gladden on drums? I have to get some of these albums. I thought I had all the organ albums. Ten stars.

**3 STANLEY TURRENTINE.** "Impressions" (from *SUGAR*, CTI) Turrentine, tenor sax; Freddie Hubbard, trumpet; George Benson, guitar; Butch Cornell, organ; Ron Carter, bass; Billy Kaye, drums; Richard "Pablo" Landrum, conga.

I know that's Stanley Turrentine on tenor. And that's Ron Carter on bass. It's okay to use a bass player when you've got one like that. Is this "So What" or "Impressions"? That's what the changes are. I think Stanley plays great with organ groups. He's a great player, though. People say a lot of things about Stanley, but what it comes down to is that Stanley can really play—anything. Ron is groovin' his butt off here. The organist is playin' those changes nice. It's not Lonnie,

## JOEY DE FRANCESCO

by Larry Birnbaum

Just one year out of Philadelphia's High School for the Creative and Performing Arts, Joey De Francesco already has two major-label albums under his belt, plus session and touring credits with Miles Davis and a slew of awards, club and festival dates, and scholarship offers.

The son of Philly organist John De Francesco, Joey picked up piano and organ at age four. At 10, he won the Jazz Society of Philadelphia's McCoy Tyner Scholarship to the Settlement Music School. In 1987, he placed third at the International Thelonious Monk Piano Jazz Competition in Washington, D.C.; Columbia Records vice-president Dr. George Butler was in the house and asked De Francesco for a tape. That led to De Francesco's 1989 Columbia debut, *All Of Me* (see "Record & CD Reviews," Oct. '89), featuring the Hammond B3 on all but two cuts. In the meantime, Miles Davis requested a tape



JOHN D. FOX III

and, a year later, invited Joey to tour Europe and record on his album *Amandla*. (De Francesco's new album, *Where Were You?*, is reviewed in this issue.)

This was his first Blindfold Test. He was told only that the majority of selections were recorded at Rudy Van Gelder's studio in Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey. (Special thanks to Joe "Ace" Blackwell for A&R coordination.)

is it? Gene Ludwig? Man, this guy is playin', too. I've got to get this or I'll go crazy. It's not Sonny Phillips. John Patton? Who is it?

LB: Butch Cornell.

JD: Man I never heard of him—never. But he's playin'. That's 5 stars.

**4 JIMMY SMITH & WES MONTGOMERY.** "Down By The Riverside" (from *THE DYNAMIC DUO*, Verve) Smith, organ; Montgomery, guitar; Richard Davis, bass; Grady Tate, drums; plus horn section arranged by Oliver Nelson.

Grady Tate, definitely, on drums. Richard Davis on bass. Jimmy and Wes. The arranger is Oliver Nelson. I know every solo and note on this. It's one of my favorite Jimmy albums. I love this, man—this gets a thousand stars. You can tell the difference between all the other organ players and Jimmy Smith. I know Jimmy personally. Him and another guy named Don Patterson are really strong. Don Patterson, I think, is the best for playing bebop stuff.

**5 ODELL BROWN & THE ORGAN-IZERS.** "Raising The Roof" (from *RAISING THE ROOF*, Cadet) Brown, organ; Artee "Duke" Payne, alto sax; Thomas Purvis, tenor sax; Curtis Prince, drums.

Is anybody on here known? I know most of the organ players. Who's that on tenor?

LB: Thomas Purvis.

JD: Never heard of him. It's not Eddie Buster on organ, is it? Is it a group? Who is it? The Organ-izers? Wow, man, you really got me there. I wish I knew about these guys. Four stars.

**6 BARBARA DENNERLEIN.** "Straight Ahead" (from *STRAIGHT AHEAD!*, Enja) Dennerlein, organ; Ray Anderson, trombone; Mitch Watkins, guitar; Ronnie Burrage, drums.

The trombone player's crazy. It's not Steve Turre, is it? Who's the trombone player? He's up there in that high register. I've got to hear the organ solo—a lot of them comp similar, and you can't guess from the comping all the time. Is this a new album? Sounds like somebody new. Who is it?

LB: Barbara Dennerlein, from West Germany.

JD: That's her playing? This sure isn't done at Rudy's. I'm gonna have to get this. That's great—new organ players. She's got a lot of influences. That's something, man. She's out there with Shirley Scott and Trudie Pitts. Give her four stars on that one. Boy, I have to get that. There's a kid in Chicago, too, named Wayman Davis—plays just like Jimmy Smith. DB

## CHARLES LLOYD

FROM DEEP QUIET INTO ACTIVITY, CHARLES LLOYD RETURNS WITH A STRONG NEW ALBUM.

by Josef Woodard

“I heard an old piece of mine on the radio at six o'clock this morning, and the announcer comes on, says, ‘That was Charles Lloyd, recorded before he dropped out of the scene.’ Dropped out of the scene,” he smirks, with his usual flair. “Imagine that.”

Saxist/flutist Lloyd knows intimately about the vicissitudes of public life and scene-making. Over the last three decades, he has had a mercurial rep in public—having swung from great heights of exposure to a self-imposed exile and self-discovery.

With the release of *Fish Out Of Water*, Lloyd's first for ECM (841 088-2) and his best in years—maybe decades—he's again making a bid for life in the external world. With the help of an icily eloquent European rhythm section—bassist Palle Danielsson, pianist Bobo Stenson, and drummer Jon Christensen—an ethereal sense of poise governs the proceedings. Lloyd's own tone and ideas on the tenor teem with freshness, dark beauty, and repose (see p. 39). Incidentally, a summer tour of the U.S. and Europe, featuring the music from *Fish Out Of Water*, is in the works.

Lloyd hails from Memphis, and—university student that he is—he bows to the influence of his Southern, Cherokee, African, Irish, and Mongolian roots. In Memphis, he played with such blues heroes as Johnny Ace, Bobby Blue Bland, B. B. King, and Howlin' Wolf. Meanwhile, he and his classmate/trumpeter Booker Little were getting jazz tutelage from the likes of Memphis natives George Coleman and Phineas Newborn. Often citing near-religious revelations in his personal history, Lloyd recalls an early epiphany on a Johnny Ace gig. “Because I could figure out fractions and everything, when I was playing this extremely slow blues with Johnny Ace, I was playing these whole notes. My mind was active. I'm checking out what he's doing on piano. When I'm checking it out, lo and behold, I got zapped again with enlightenment. I was no longer playing the music—I was the music. I was right in there. There was no longer any time, man. There was just,” he sighs dramatically, “whoa.”

“That experience was so powerful, it just sent me on my way. I love it when music is happening and I live for the idea of removing time. Don't misunderstand me, I come from a tradition. I play out of Duke and Bird and such as well as Bach and even the Medieval



DOROTHY DAHR

cats. I love music. One thing that bothered me at USC was that they said it was 300 years of European classical tradition. I said, ‘What are you talking about? What about African and Indian music, and Duke? My father went to school with Jimmie Lunceford.’”

At USC in the late '50s, Lloyd played a role in a West Coast ferment at the time that included Ornette Coleman, Scott LaFaro, Paul Bley, Eric Dolphy, Charlie Haden, and even Ellis Marsalis. Buddy Collette recommended Lloyd for a spot with Chico Hamilton's group, the first real showcase for the young saxist from 1961-'64. Next was a brief stint with Cannonball Adderley ('64-'65). Lloyd found himself, inevitably, magnetized by the jazz nucleus of New York. “When I got to New York, there were all of my heroes—Mingus, Monk, Trane, Gil Evans. I got to know everybody in my lifetime. I used to sit at the feet of Coleman Hawkins. He was such a beautiful man.

“All these great masters had such beautiful dignity. The music was so moving and teaching and positive. I feel so ‘elixir-fied’ that, in my lifetime, I'm part of that tradition.”

During the '60s, Lloyd developed the inside-outside musical approach that started the Coltrane comparisons rolling. “Dissonance is important to use with consonance,” he explains. “It can't just be all missionary position. Booker [Little] used to talk to me a lot about dissonance. He was working with the minor 2nd a lot. He had a thing for it. Check out his album *Out Front*. He was very creative and beautiful.”

In the mid- to late '60s, Lloyd's quartet, featuring the then-fledgling Keith Jarrett and Jack DeJohnette, swept the music world into

a frenzy uncommon for a jazz act. Lloyd became the saxist most likely to woo the uninitiated/crossover audience, as his band played afront rock bands at The Fillmore West (San Francisco's illustrious rock emporium), sold a million records, and became the first jazz group to visit the Soviet Union, in 1967. “Thinking for a moment about the original quartet,” Lloyd asserts, “we had such wonderful communication. That was such an orchestra. Jack was just so right there. [Bassist] Cecil [McBee] was trying to keep us grounded. We were space cadets and were headed on out into the stratosphere and Cecil said, ‘I'm trying to keep this music together now, fellas.’ Some nights, we would be gone.”

The buzz, in fact, got too loud: By the '70s, Lloyd had retreated into a long period of avoiding the glare of celebrity, meditating and hanging out in Big Sur, Cal., and the plush woods of Montecito. He explored Eastern religious dictates, made some low-key albums—the persistent airiness of which presaged new age music.

Then, in the '80s, the prodigious young pianist Michel Petrucciani arrived at his doorstep in Big Sur—protégé seeking out mentor—and Lloyd reemerged again, recording and touring with Petrucciani. The French pianist was the catalyst for bringing Lloyd out of his hermitage. “That touched me, because I had not been into making music in a public way. I played there in the woods, and I liked my quiet life. I had come to that thing of inner journey. I've always been about that. I don't know whether that's a blessing or a curse. I love people, but there's something about solitude—I need to come from deep quiet into activity.”

In part, his absences during the past decade have been due less to inward mental impulses than health problems. A node was removed from his throat, and Lloyd can't be around smoke (a problem when it comes to playing jazz clubs). More seriously, a rare disorder necessitated the removal of six feet of his lower intestines. Although he weaves in and out of public music-making, Lloyd is a dedicated creative force, who has more than once been lured from his shell out of a sense of higher purpose.

“If people heard this music more, I think we would be much further along in terms of learning truth and wisdom and getting closer to ourselves. What's laid on people is conducive to keeping them sleepwalking. I say, ‘Wake up, we need some glorious shocks to put us in another key.’ This music is sometimes in B flat and then you look up and, lo and behold, it's in E major up on the Hyperions looking down on a waterfall with a little meadowlark over there and a forest flower nearby.

“It's all interconnected. I have my work. I've always had a sense of mission and I'm rededicated to it.”

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