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Jazz, Blues & Beyond

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Cover photograph of Wynton Marsalis by John Booz.

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# DOWN BEAT

Jazz: Blues & Beyond

**PUBLISHER** John Maher  
**EDITORIAL DIRECTOR** Frank Alkyer  
**MANAGING EDITOR** John Ephland  
**ASSOCIATE EDITOR** Dave Helland  
**ART DIRECTOR** Dan Czubak  
**PRODUCTION MANAGER** Gloria Baldwin  
**CIRCULATION MANAGER** Elaine Rizleris  
**PRESIDENT** Jack Maher

**ALBUM REVIEWERS:** Jon Balleros, Larry Birnbaum, Fred Bouchard, Owen Cordie, Elaine Guregian, Frank-John Hadley, Peter Kostakis, Art Lange, John Litweiler, Howard Mandel, John McDonough, Bill Milkowski, Ben Sandmel, Gene Santoro, Bill Shoemaker, Jack Sohmer, Robin Tolleson, Ron Walburn, Pete Welding, Kevin Whitehead, Josef Woodard.

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**CONTRIBUTORS:** Larry Birnbaum, Michael Bourne, Tom Copi, Lauren Deutsch, John Diliberto, Leonard Feather, Mitchell Feldman, Andy Freiberg, Art Lange, Howard Mandel, John McDonough, Bill Milkowski, Paul Nafkin, Herb Nolan, Gene Santoro, Mitchell Seidel, Stephanie Stein, Pete Welding, Josef Woodard, Scott Yanow.

**CORRESPONDENTS:** Albany, NY, Georgia Urban; Atlanta, Dorothy Pearce; Austin, Michael Point; Baltimore, Fred Douglass; Boston, Fred Bouchard; Buffalo, John P. Lockhart; Chicago, Jim DeJong; Cincinnati, Bob Nave; Cleveland, C. A. Colombi; Detroit, Michael G. Nastos; Las Vegas, Brian Sanders; Los Angeles, Zan Stewart; Minneapolis, Mary Snyder; Nashville, Dave Jenkins; New Orleans, Joel Simpson; New York, Jeff Levenson; Philadelphia, Russell Woessner; Phoenix, Robert Herschen; Pittsburgh, David J. Fabilli; San Francisco, Michael Handler; Seattle, Joseph R. Murphy; Toronto, Mark Miller; Vancouver, Vern Montgomery; Washington, DC, W. A. Brower; Argentina, Max Seligmann; Australia, Eric Myers;

Belgium, Willy Vanhassel; Brazil, Christopher Pickard; Finland, Roger Freundlich; Great Britain, Brian Priestley; India, Vinod Advani; Italy, Ruggero Stassi; Jamaica, Maureen Sheridan; Japan, Shoichi Yui; Netherlands, Jaap Ludeke; Norway, Randi Hultin; Poland, Charles Gans; Senegambia, Oka Drame; South Africa, Howard Belling; Sweden, Lars Lystedt.

**EDITORIAL/ADVERTISING PRODUCTION OFFICE/ ADMINISTRATION & ADVERTISING OFFICE:**

180 West Park Ave.  
 Elmhurst IL 60126  
 1-708/941-2030  
 FAX: 708/941-3210  
 John Maher, Advertising Sales  
 1-708/941-2030  
**East:** Bob Olesen  
 720 Greenwich St., New York NY 10014  
 1-212/243-4786

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# WYNTON

## PROPHET IN STANDARD TIME

By Dave Helland

A rainy afternoon in Arlington Heights, Ill.—just a mile up the street from the Italian-American Sports Hall of Fame—the photographer and his assistant convert one corner of Wynton's hotel suite into a studio while he fiddles with his trumpet. Somebody tripped over it a couple days before and one valve sticks.

"Do you have a name for your trumpet?" the photographer asks. "Johnson." Wynton replies, chuckles, and adds, "No, not really."

The hotel is filled with a bat mitzvah, wedding receptions, and a sales meeting—no space for a rehearsal—and the band has dispersed. Alto saxist Wes Anderson has gone home to be with his wife during her labor. He calls during the interview to announce the birth of Wessel IV, 7 lbs. and 4 oz. Wynton plays a riff to him over the phone—the basis of a future composition by Anderson dedicated to his son?

As the photographer juggles lights, cameras, and a step ladder, we engage Wynton in more banter, the sort of topics that come up when you're hanging with someone you've just met. Where'd you grow up? What'd you do? "In Kenner, outside New Orleans, and I liked playing ball and fighting. I didn't like getting beat up, but if you like to fight you're going to get your butt whipped, too. My whole thing was I was not going to take any of the disrespect that was prevalent at that time where we were growing up. Three black kids in school with 50 white kids, you're going to fight, especially if the whites aren't making much money."

His reading matter: Faulkner's *The Sound And The Fury*, Albert Murray's *Stompin' The Blues*, his friend Stanley Crouch's *Notes Of A Hanging Judge*, Harold Cruise's *Plural But Equal*, J.H. Kwabena Nketia's *The Music Of Africa*.

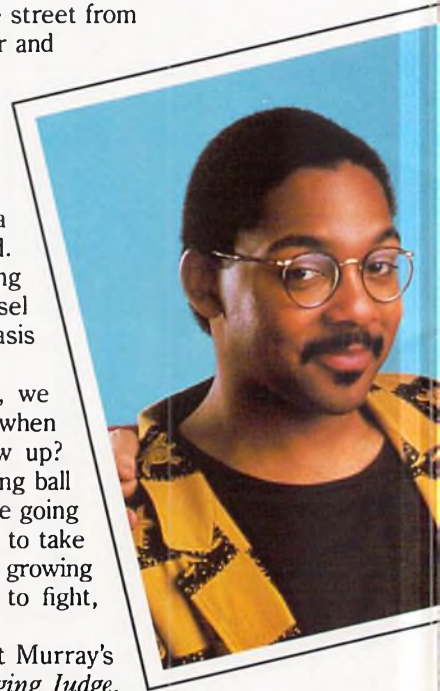
The controversial and censored rap group, 2 Live Crew: "No doubt in my mind that 'Chew my d\*\*k like a rat chews cheese' is obscene. I don't care whether you are a black person living in the deepest ghetto or a white person living in the loftiest penthouse, it is obscene to anybody who has children. Definitely they should be allowed to do that; they shouldn't be censored. I just think you should raise kids so they are not preoccupied with vulgarity. But ultimately if people want a certain thing, they'll purchase it."

His appearances on *Sesame St.* and *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood*: "I liked those shows; I liked them when I was growing up. I wish Fat Albert was still on TV."

Jazz movies: "I didn't like *Bird* but *Round Midnight* was alright. None of these movies capture the complexity or richness of the people involved. With *Bird*, if they would have just let his music come out clearly, the sound of *Bird*, the beauty in his sound, the movie would have been successful.

"I don't think *Amadeus* got trivialized. One interesting thing, my little brother Delfeayo was saying just last night, from seeing *Amadeus*, you realize just how messed up the people around Mozart were by the greatness of his genius, the nature of it. The same thing is true of Charlie Parker, but I don't think he was addressed on that level [in *Bird*]."

Miles Davis: "In his autobiography, he gives the impression that he ran me off his bandstand in Vancouver. Not true. I went on his bandstand to address some disparaging statements that he was making about me publicly. I felt I should address them publicly with my horn. I don't know who this mysterious 'they' was that he claims told me to go up there. I told me to go up there. I told him I'm up here to play, and he said come back tomorrow night. I said, 'I'm here tonight.' When the guitarist finished his solo, I started playing. He claimed I didn't know what they were playing. Bull. His band was playing blues, and when I started playing he was trying to cut them off. When they stopped, I left. There was no





"A beautiful day in the neighborhood."  
Wynton and Mr. Rogers



## PREACHIN' AND TEACHIN' WYNTON GOES TO SCHOOL

"Jazz music really teaches you what it is to live in a democracy," Wynton Marsalis explains to a classroom full of youngsters. "The whole negotiation of the rights of individuals with responsibility to the group, that is the greatest beauty of jazz music as a mythic entity. The myth of jazz teaches you what it is to be an American. Just as a spiritual mythology has gods and heroes, the gods of the jazz mythology are Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong. The myth we teach our kids today is a commercial mythology. The gods of commercial mythology bring destruction where they go, bring misinformation and exploitation, all of which are justified by commercial ends. The worth of something now is determined by how well it sells, rather than its substance."

Not all of what he has to say is on such an exalted, philosophical plane. Some of it is practical advice for the student musicians. "You can learn all your scales in a week—it's like learning the multiplication tables. Woodshedding is different; it's going off by yourself and addressing your deficiencies relentlessly, subjecting yourself to yourself. Music can really help you with your discipline and with your personality." Much of his talk, however, is about how much fun it is to play in a band—marching, stage orchestra, and especially, in a jazz band. Sitting in with Ron Carter's band at Lincoln High School in East St. Louis [Ill.], Justin DiCioccio's band at LaGuardia School of the Arts in New York City, George Allen's band at Overbrook High School in Philadelphia, and Bart Marantz's band at Booker T. Washington High School in Dallas; visiting elementary and high schools in Connecticut with Yamaha's Bud Di Fluri and returning the next year to find that the number of students playing trumpet has increased from a couple to a dozen; directing a recreation of the classic Ellington Orchestra of the late '30s with an all-star group of high school students organized by Philadelphia educator George Allen; or chatting with groups of students who were his guests at each of his *Crescent City Christmas Card* concerts last December—working with students is an important part of what Wynton does. It's how he met his new pianist, 18-year-old Eric Reed, who he first heard four years ago. It's part of his master plan.

"To produce one Louis Armstrong, you have to have 50 trumpet players marching in the street who can really play. Charlie Parker grew up in an environment where there were many great saxophone players. You're not going to produce a genius of that level with two people who are trying to escape sophistication.

"What I would like to see is bands all over the country that can play Duke Ellington's music. I'd like to see marching bands with the New Orleans style of improvisation. To have students learning these things, having a culture informed with the richness of itself and therefore not susceptible to exploitation by the vulgarity that is being elevated now."

way I would get into a physical confrontation with him, it wouldn't be fair. I wouldn't get into a physical confrontation with a man old enough to be my grandfather.

"When I had left, then he picked his horn up. It struck me as being strange that the same breath and lungs that could carry those disparaging words failed him when it was time to play some music. I was raised to believe in integrity; musical integrity, hard work, and practice. No amount of race baiting, woman hating, self-elevation, and the other aspects of Mr. Davis' persona that he has adopted, none of that is going to help him especially when it comes time to deal with some music.

"I want to close the book on the Wynton Marsalis/Miles Davis commentary. That was just a lot of talk that had nothing to do with me or him; but any time that these questions can be settled musically, he's free to come on my bandstand or, if invited, I will show up anywhere in the world at anytime with my horn to let it be known publicly how I feel about these things. We can go to the bandstand with it. Let's play some music and then we'll see what's happening. But you know, when I went on his bandstand, Miles was playing organ [*loud laughter throughout the room*]."

Wynton's third exercise on standards, *The Resolution Of Romance* [see "Reviews," Aug. '90], is an intimate family affair dedicated to his mother Dolores with his father Ellis on piano and Delfeayo behind the boards. "I was trying to pay homage to my father, but I had to wait till I learned to play the changes well enough on tunes he would like. We've been talking about this for a couple years and I kept a list of the tunes he mentioned."

Romantic and sensual, short takes on a score of tunes—mostly standards of the American popular song with a couple originals—the disc is also a lesson in sophistication, musical and emotional. "We tried to play in every key ['Where Or When' in E, 'The Very Thought Of You' in F, 'I Got A Right To Sing The Blues' in A]. That's another arena of musical sophistication you have to address. It's a matter of being able to hear, working on your hearing by playing a song in every key and singing the bass notes to yourself so you can hear the bottom of the form of what you're doing."

He recorded with the sheet music in front of him underscoring the importance of knowing the meanings of the songs so that each solo still captures that feeling, that spirit. And Wynton agrees that they don't write 'em like that anymore? "Not on the level of Kern or Gershwin coming out of that whole romantic, European-type of harmony and the American sound of the blues. The combination of this addressing of a certain type of harmonic and melodic sophistication has been lost.

"And the meaning of lyrics, all you really have to do is compare songs of different eras. Whoever does this will see the lack of romantic sophistication. A lot of this goes with our denigration of women and the exploitation of teenage sexuality. If you are really dealing with music you are trying to elevate consciousness about romance. Music is so closely tied up with sex and sensuality that

when you are dealing with music you are trying to enter the world of that experience, trying to address the richness of the interaction between a man and a woman, not its lowest reduction.

"If you're dealing with the architecture of the human spirit, you're not dealing with old and new. Very few people writing are thinking about what it means to be human on the level of *The Odyssey*. You want to see Odysseus come back and kick those people's behinds. You don't care whether it is in Greece or New York.

"Stanley Crouch says everybody has two heritages: their ethnic heri-



Wynton with members of East St. Louis' (Ill.) Musicfest U.S.A. Gold award-winning Lincoln High School music program.

tage and human heritage. The greatest works of art, that is what they address. The human aspects are what give art its real enduring power, not the racial aspect. The racial aspect, that's a crutch so that you don't have to go out in the world.

"Think about the people who are the foundation of jazz—Louis Armstrong, Charlie Parker, Ellington—these were not racist men. They had to talk Duke out of a tune in *Black, Brown And Beige* entitled 'The Black, Brown And Beige Is For The Red, White And Blue.' Our greatest figures are men the caliber of Duke Ellington. So let's talk about Duke Ellington. Why elevate the unsophisticated when you can deal with the sophisticated?"



"The reason jazz music is not being developed at a rate we want to see it developed is not because it is the end of the world. It is because youngsters are not being taught the fundamentals of the music."

The intelligentsia tries to explain the world but only if it fits their interpretation of it. Historians discuss the end of history: the last great ideological struggle has ended, i.e., we won, the commies lost. Physicists postulate the end of science: how does a discipline based on the measurement of observable phenomena continue when the observations at a subatomic level are unverifiable? Meanwhile, academics argue over the canon: the works produced by the great minds that form the core of Western civilization, and the role they play in education. So it seems logical to question the end of jazz. Will a music that has repeatedly redefined itself continue to redefine itself every couple of decades? What irreparable loss will the music experience in the next 10 years as the last of its great innovators and the men who worked closely with them end their playing days? How will "the sound of surprise" keep from being just another classical music based on the compositions of those long dead?

"Apply that to any art form. Would anybody say when the Renaissance masters died, the art of European painting died with them? No, Picasso could paint in that style if he chose to do it; that's how great a painter he was. Some of his figures do have that Michaelangelian-type of vibe. Picasso addressed the fundamentals. You go to an exhibit of Picasso, you're going to see the same stuff—apples on tables—though he didn't paint in the style of the Renaissance, but he addressed the fundamentals. A lot of stuff that is going on that is called jazz doesn't address the fundamentals of jazz.

"Louis Armstrong said that early New Orleans music is the foundation of jazz music and the closer you get to playing that way, the closer you are to jazz. When I first read that, I thought he just wants everybody to play that old style. That's not what he was saying at all. He meant, first, the communal conception of improvisation. A lot of music that is called jazz doesn't have that. Number two, the conception of vocal effects on instruments—how King Oliver played. Number three, a dance-oriented rhythm, a beat, a lope to the rhythm, a swing, an attitude of optimism in the

face of adversity, not the attitude of commercial exploitation. Fourth, a type of worldliness in the conception of the music that is best represented by Duke Ellington on records like *Afro-Eurasian Eclipse* [Fantasy 9498], *Afro-Bossa* [Discovery 871], *Latin American Suite* [Fantasy 8419], *Far East Suite* [Bluebird 7640]. These are very sophisticated works that deal with music from all around the world, that address a certain type of virtuosity and sophistication in terms of techniques that were developed in New Orleans music. That is what Ellington was always looking for. In his *New Orleans Suite* [Atlantic 1580], written in 1970, he was dealing with these same fundamentals: call and response, clarinet obbligatos, blues, trombone growls, happy type of swing, the mysteriousness of the music, the melancholy.

"The reason jazz music is not being developed at a rate we want to see it developed is not because it is the end of the world. It is because youngsters are not being taught the fundamentals of the music. People talk about what jazz is. Duke Ellington is what jazz is, he is the greatest jazz musician, his music is the most comprehensive. I go around the country all year and I listen to nothing but bands. There is not one high school band in the country that can play a concert of Duke Ellington's mature music. Not one band. Not one. That's what the problem is. The problem is not that we've done everything. We don't know the music. My whole definition is based on Duke Ellington. He is the figure I hold up because he addressed most comprehensively what jazz music actually is." So to the extent that Anthony Braxton, Joe Zawinul, or Kenny G[orelick] meet the "Ellington Test," that they address the fundamentals of group improvisation, vocalization, and a swinging optimism, is the extent that they play jazz.

One of the goals that Wynton has set is to make available to schools all around the country the sheet music of Duke Ellington so that young Americans can learn the music of their nation's greatest composer, can study the art of America's greatest artist. Among the scores of students in each of hundreds of schools, one day one of them will write something that approaches "Koko" or *The Tattooed Bride*, that others will play the alto saxophone with the transcendence of Johnny Hodges, the clarinet with the elegance of Jimmy Hamilton, the trumpet with the leonine fire of Cootie Williams. And as that happens, Wynton will always have the makings of a big band; one that he can keep on the road for 250 dates a year, always there to play his latest composition, always ready to record—and that, as I see it, is the master plan. **DB**

#### WYNTON MARSALIS' EQUIPMENT

"I like a sound that is focused in all registers so that the notes fall in place where they are supposed to be," explains Wynton about the horns made for him by Dave Monette of Chicago. "I like a heavy horn, almost so heavy that I'm tired when I'm done playing. I like a big mouthpiece, deep and round with a big hole. The throat is big and so is the cup."

The horn Wynton has been playing since December is a Monette STC 2 B trumpet with a Monette STC B-2 mouthpiece. The tuning and bell curves are perfect half circles—a Monette innovation—and it is unfinished as are all Monette horns. Monette is building a new horn for Wynton—his 11th—with several unusual design features such as ovate tuning and bell curves and an unconventional bracing system that makes the trumpet almost twice as heavy as a conventional horn.

#### WYNTON MARSALIS SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

The following have been released since *DB*'s last cover story on Marsalis, Nov. '87. He maintains that he is not the "E. Dankworth" on Marcus Roberts' *Deep In The Shed* (RCA/Novus 3078), as is widely assumed, but that Dankworth is a British trumpeter, a friend of Courtney Pine's, who doesn't play in public much. Sure.

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|---|---|
| <p><b>as a leader</b><br/> <i>THE RESOLUTION OF ROMANCE</i>—Columbia 46143<br/> <i>CRESCENT CITY CHRISTMAS CARD</i>—Columbia 45287<br/> <i>THE MAJESTY OF THE BLUES</i>—Columbia 45091<br/> <i>LIVE AT BLUES ALLEY</i>—Columbia 40675<br/> <i>PORTRAIT OF WYNTON MARSALIS</i>—CBS 44726</p> | <p><b>with Frank Morgan</b><br/> <i>MOOD INDIGO</i>—Antilles 791320-2<br/> <b>with Marcus Roberts</b><br/> <i>THE TRUTH IS SPOKEN HERE</i>—RCA/Novus 3051<br/> <b>with Various Artists</b><br/> <i>EPITAPH</i>—Columbia 45428</p> |
|---|---|

# MARY LOU WILLIAMS

This year, for the first time in the 37-year history of the **DOWN BEAT** Hall of Fame, a woman instrumentalist takes her place among her fellow musicians and peers. She is Mary Lou Williams.

Since its founding in 1952, the **DB** Hall of Fame has recognized four women—all of them singers. For the most part, this has accurately reflected the historic role of women in jazz. Mary Lou Williams was not the first well-known woman pianist in jazz; Lil Hardin Armstrong probably deserves that accolade. But she was the first woman to achieve international fame as a player, composer, and arranger and as a force in the music of her time. Her personality was so strong, in fact, it became the single most powerful factor in the sound of the Andy Kirk Orchestra during its peak years of the late '30s. And that was only the beginning of a talent that continued to grow over the decades, from big band swing to the avant garde of the '70s.

Mary Elfrieda Scuggs was born on May 8, 1910. She spent her early years in Atlanta and grew up in Pittsburgh where she took her stepfather's name and first performed as Mary Lou Burleigh. In the late '20s she married saxophonist John Williams, and the two joined Andy Kirk in 1929.

Mary Lou Williams was serving as occasional pianist with the band when Jack Kapp of Brunswick Records heard her and insisted she play on Kirk's first records in 1929. Kapp recorded the band extensively for about a year, then stopped as the Depression deepened. Six years later he signed the band again in 1936 after he formed Decca Records. From then until 1942 Mary Lou Williams logged the establishing phase of her career as the featured piano star of the Kirk band out front and its key arranger and theoretician behind the scenes. Because her writing was clean and without stylistic trademarks, it caught the ear of Benny Goodman, who commissioned from her "Camel Hop" and one of his most famous pieces, "Roll 'Em." She also wrote "What's Your Story Morning Glory" for Jimmie Lunceford and "Trumpet's No End" for Duke Ellington. Music from this period can be heard on *Andy Kirk And His Clouds Of Joy* (MCA 1343) and *Andy Kirk Live From The Trianon Ballroom* (Jazz Society AA503).

She left Kirk in 1942 to find what possibilities lay beyond a fine but essentially commercial jazz/dance band. She quickly fell into an elite stock company of New York players (Ed Hall, Vic Dickenson, Don Byas, Coleman Hawkins, even Josh White) with whom she made many records for various small labels in 1944-'47. It was characteristic of the times that when a major company, RCA, asked her to record in 1946, it insisted on an "all-girl" group. (Most of the small-label sides are collected on a Folkways boxed set, *The Asch Recordings*, FA 2966). Williams found refuge in composition, and produced her not-very-jazz-oriented "Zodiac Suite," a dozen tone pieces on the astrological signs. She recorded it originally on piano,



performed it with the New York Philharmonic, and a decade later with Dizzy Gillespie at Newport in 1957.

After 1947 Williams' profile grew dim. She retreated into charity work, Europe, and later, religion. She was remembered chiefly when an old Andy Kirk record would turn up on the radio or when Goodman would count off "Roll 'Em." (Her only performance of the tune with Goodman was in 1978 during the clarinetist's doleful 40th anniversary Carnegie Hall concert.) To the general public, Williams was remembered as a boogie-woogie pianist.

She returned to music in the '60s playing various piano clubs (the Cookery) and recording some of her religious program pieces for her own label, Mary Records. The third of her masses, *Mary Lou's Mass* (Mary 102) commissioned by the Vatican, became the basis for an Alvin Ailey ballet in the '70s. Her playing remained startlingly open-minded for such an established performer. In the years since she left Kirk, Williams wandered in and out of various piano schools from bop to the threshold of free jazz, where her playing could be quirky and percussive but essentially tonal and rhythmic. Her most curious excursion was undoubtedly her New York concert appearance with Cecil Taylor in 1977. Recorded by the artists and issued

on an album called *Embraced* (Pablo 2620-108), it has an oil-and-water quality as the two pianists seek contact points through the density of their styles.

Mary Lou Williams was a student of the history of jazz—a term she regarded as demeaning—and had strong ideas about its development, ideas that she taught as a faculty member at Duke University in her final years. "After the Bop Era creation in jazz stopped," she wrote in 1977, "there has been nothing new in jazz since. . . ." She also took a dim view of "avant garde, foreign composers, black magic and commercial rock." A "perverted force," she called them collectively. She felt one should play all forms of music. "Yet, to inject another basic feeling into jazz destroys the soulful feeling that is unique to jazz." It is more puzzling than ironic that these remarks were written by her for the album jacket of *Embraced*, her concert with Cecil Taylor, whom she called "my giant of the avant garde."

Mary Lou Williams died on May 28, 1981 of cancer, having lived long enough to see her music survive and her contributions well honored (she played at the White House with other jazz stars in June 1978). She is a welcome addition to the **DB** Hall of Fame.

—John McDonough



# RUDY VAN GELDER

**G**o to your local record store's jazz section, close your eyes, and pull out any record. The odds are good you'd be holding some of engineer Rudy Van Gelder's handiwork. Starting as a hobbyist recording jazz musicians in his parents' Hackensack, N.J., living room in the late 1940s, Van Gelder has become as identified with the sound of modern music as has any instrumentalist.

Fans of the early Blue Note records know of the so-called "Van Gelder sound" that became so identified with that label. And the bulk of Miles Davis' impressive Prestige sessions all originated in the Van Gelder home.

It was a disc cut for keyboardist Gil Melle in the late '40s that started Van Gelder's association with Alfred Lion of Blue Note Records. Lion wanted to record Melle and was impressed with the sound of a previous session recorded by Van Gelder. "He [Alfred] went to the studio in New York where he had been working—WOR in New York—and the engineer said, 'I can't get that sound; you better go to the fellow who made it for you.' So Alfred came out to see me and that's what happened. That started the whole thing rolling in terms of commercial recording."

Savoy, Verve, Impulse. Miles, Monk, Coltrane. Van Gelder's jazz associations are impressive. But he proudly points to his ability to record other music as well, making classical masters and some classical recordings in the 1960s.

It is Van Gelder's meticulous nature that has also helped earn his reputation. Visitors to his current studio—a rustic, custom-built, chalet-like structure in Englewood Cliffs, N.J., that's also his home—know about his no-nonsense approach. Donning gloves to protect the sensitive microphones, Van Gelder will scurry out of the control room to make the tiniest adjustment if things don't sound just right.

Even today, more than 40 years after he combined his two hobbies of amateur electronics and jazz, the sound Van Gelder gets out of a recording date is unmistakably his. "I always had a pretty good idea of what I wanted to do and how things should sound," he says. "No matter what I was doing, my



MITCHELL SEIDEL

mind was on how could I do this thing better, how to make that thing sound better, what tools would I need to do that."

And, like the jazz musicians he records, Van Gelder is loath to stand still. He recently made the transition to digital technology in his studio, still managing to make the recordings sound like his.

The change in technology was easy for him, but difficult for some of his clients. "The most difficult part, for me, of the digital revolution has been convincing the people that I work for that it was the thing to do. That was the toughest part. I knew it was a complete and total revolution of the technique that I was looking for," he said.

"If you just listen once to what it can do within my environment, here, I would never

want to record analog again, and I didn't. Cut it off completely," he added.

Van Gelder said the new digital technology "makes it possible for someone at home to plug in that disc and hear what we hear in the control room, and that was totally impossible before."

Just as he wants to stay current with recording technology, Van Gelder, like many of the people he records, also doesn't want to dwell on the past. "I prefer not to be associated too much with the past," he says. "I think what I'm doing now is every bit as good, if not better, than what I did then," he maintains. "I know that what I've done in the past is being appreciated, [but] I'm not part of history . . . I'm part of the present. And hopefully the future." —*Mitchell Seidel*

It was a picture-perfect weekend in Chicago as 550,000 people poured into Grant Park for the seventh annual Chicago Blues Festival. Broadcast live on WBEZ Public Radio coast-to-coast, the free three-day fest featured three stages and 35 acts. There was something for everyone, from the person who thinks the blues are something you can't wash with the delicates, to the veteran fan who has followed the blues since the days of Robert Johnson.

Each day of the Fest followed a different theme. Friday spotlighted some of Chicago's finest harmonica players, including Charlie Musselwhite and James Cotton. Saturday's format included a tribute to the late Aaron "T-Bone" Walker, perhaps most noted for his landmark-status blues jam, "Stormy Monday." Offering a healthy sampling of some of T-Bone's best efforts were the guitars of Otis Rush, Joe Hughes, Duke Robillard (soon to replace Jimmy Vaughan in the Fabulous Thunderbirds), and Walker contemporary Lowell Fulson.

Sunday explored the Piedmont blues, a style in which the guitar functions as bass, rhythm, and melody so you don't have to hire too many musicians. Featured masters of this art were guitarist John Cephas and harmonica player Phil Wiggins. Sunday night ended on a high wail from Grammy winners Ruth Brown and John Lee Hooker.

While top-draw names like Brown and Hooker plus Big Daddy Kinsey and the Kinsey Report and Luther Allison drew the largest crowds, some of the best (and worst) blues came from the smaller stages showcasing some of the less celebrated artists.

The Crossroads Stage, "Diamonds In Our Own Backyard," gave some lesser-known South- and West-side blues acts a chance to increase their audiences, not to mention pocketbooks. David Spector and the Bluebirds featured a core rhythm section behind a variety of vocalists. The first up, "Barkin" Bill, was dressed like and almost as animated as a train conductor. At one point during a slow blues dirge, group lethargy threatened to derail the entire song. But peppy Katherine Davis livened things up with her sassy rendition of "Let The Good Times Roll." On the slicker side, Cicero Blake, featuring vocalist Katherine Sargent, focused more on the mainstream/pop end of blues. Tuxedoed and synthesized, Blake performed a credible version of Robert Cray's "Strong Persuader." Sargent opened her end of the show with a real stretch of the blues idiom, "Watch Your Step," by Anita Baker. However, she redeemed herself with a cathartic version of "Dr. Feelgood."

The Front Porch Stage offered down-home, get-down-to-business, I'm-so-poor-my-first-guitar-was-made-out-of-dandelions blues acts, many of which were quite good. In a solo performance, Lowell Fulson gave an understated, soulful performance of traditional blues. Another Front Porch highlight was Bob Margolin, former guitarist for Muddy Waters. His prolific slide guitar and deep, gravelly voice drove home the likes of



# CHICAGO BLUES ALIVE AND KICKING

By Amy Abern

Photos By John Booz



Grady Gaines



John Lee Hooker

"Old School" (inspired by Waters) and Margolin's favorite tune, "Can't Be Satisfied." Proving that you can play the blues all your life and still not get it right was guitarist Lovie Lee. Beside the fact that he couldn't quite tune his guitar, or remember an entire song's worth of lyrics, he kept sliding up too high on the fret board, creating weird reharmonizations of the I-IV-V chord structure. The Front Porch's strongest show involved a tribute to South Side Florence's, a blues club that burned to the ground in 1983. Paying tribute were some of the club's regulars, including Lefty Dizz, B.B. "Big Voice" Odum, and Magic Slim.

At the Petrillo Band Shell, most of the main attractions gave performances that warranted headliner status. Luther Allison made it all the way from his new home in Paris to show Chicago he hadn't forgotten his roots. Playing the role of proud papa, Allison shared the stage with his son, Bernard, a consummate guitarist himself.

Then came a throwback to the '50s with vocalists Nappy Brown and Ruth Brown. Nappy's set was full of sexual innuendo and at times, just plain sex, as graphically displayed during "Lemon-Squeezin' Daddy." A graduate from the Ray Charles School of Twitching, Brown laid claim to one of Charles' biggest hits, "Night Time Is The Right Time."

Ruth Brown courted the audience with her alternately forceful and sensitive vocal approach, finely honed from her work on Broadway. From her lamenting "Since I Fell For You" to her coffee-grinding "Be Mine" (which, incidentally, "has nothing to do with coffee-grinding, honey!"), she revved the audience to a feverish pitch.

One of the biggest flaws in the main stage lineup was vocalist Paula Cupp. Dressed in a little black nothing with big hair, she proved you can have a great voice, great pitch, be able to bump, grind, growl, and emote in all the right places according to the blues computer readouts, but if you don't feel the blues, you shouldn't be singing them.

The Boogie King, John Lee Hooker, trudged up on stage for the Grand Finale. Weary at the age of 70-something, he sat through most of his set and played some of his signatures, including "Boom, Boom," "One Bourbon, One Scotch, One Beer," and the Grammy award-winning, "I'm In the Mood." Besides occasional flashes of impressive guitar work, Hooker left most of the imaginative playing to Charlie Musselwhite and Roy Rogers, both of whom play on his *Healer* album (see "Reviews" Feb. '90). The requisite surprise guests joining Hooker on stage included vocalist California Raisin, Buddy Miles, and Willie Dixon.

The first annual Chicago Blues Festival attracted 140,000. Seven years later, the audience has almost quadrupled. What started out as just another summer event has turned into a major tourist attraction.

Bruce Iglauer, president of the Chicago-based blues label Alligator Records, notes his record sales have tripled over seven years. He commented, "I don't know how

much of the increase is due to the Festival, but yeah, I do think the Blues Fest has become a major tourist attraction. Whether that's good or bad, I don't know; it's a reality."

Tom Marker, who hosts *Bluesbreakers*, a radio program on WXRT, feels there's always been a large blues audience. "When the Blues Festival started, it was the first time the Chicago government got involved with promoting blues," Marker said. "Blues has always been popular in the city and people are just showing their good taste by going out and supporting the music."

Over the years, Chicago has become a self-proclaimed "Blues Capital." Whether this was a natural evolution or quick thinking on the part of some p.r. agency is immaterial, the blues has become an integral part of the makeup of Chicago, the same way jazz has become synonymous with New Orleans. L. D. Thurman, owner of the historic Checkerboard Lounge, agrees, and adds, "As long as I can remember, Chicago's always been known as 'Home of the Blues.'" Has there been a noticeable increase in business? He laughs, "Business has always been good."

Bill Gilmore has owned B.L.U.E.S., a well-known Chicago nightclub for 11 years. He opened B.L.U.E.S., Etc. three years ago because B.L.U.E.S.' limited seating can no longer accommodate the crowds who flock to popular acts like Willie Dixon and James Cotton. (B.L.U.E.S. seats 100 and B.L.U.E.S., Etc. seats 275.) Said Gilmore, "I think Chicago is finally starting to see signs that there's a gold mine in blues. If you took away Bo Diddley and Muddy Waters, the city would feel a real void."

Barry Dolins, director of Neighborhood Festivals, has handled the Chicago Blues Festival for five years. He's pleased to play a part in promoting the growth of blues in the city, and in general. As he explained, "Blues is good-time music. No matter what your upbringing, race, age, it's just plain good music."

Part of the Festival's appeal draws on the rumors of surprise star appearances. Three years ago, Keith Richards of the Rolling Stones showed up at the Fest and then later at a local blues club to further his blues education. This year, it was speculated that guitarist Steve Miller would appear "unannounced," but he never showed. "Some artists are more tied to their pocketbook than they are to their craft," sighed Dolins. "It's a shame when you can't make the time to show thanks to the artists who inspired you to play in the first place."

Next year's theme may revolve loosely around Delta guitar great Robert Johnson, who would have been 80 years old. Johnson, who died at the age of 27, wrote, among many others, the blues staple "Crossroads." Wouldn't that be something if a certain famous guitarist who will remain unnamed, known perhaps for the most famous version of that song in a group called Cream, showed up next year as part of a tribute? Dolins smiled and said, "Yeah, that thought crossed my mind." **DB**

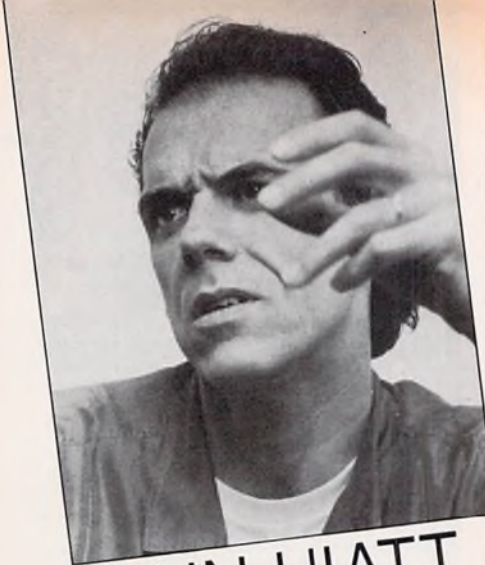


Marshall and Leonard Chess, Willie Dixon and James Mack.

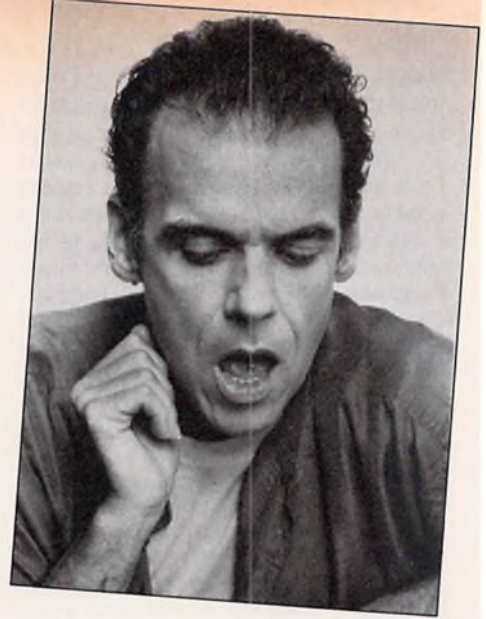
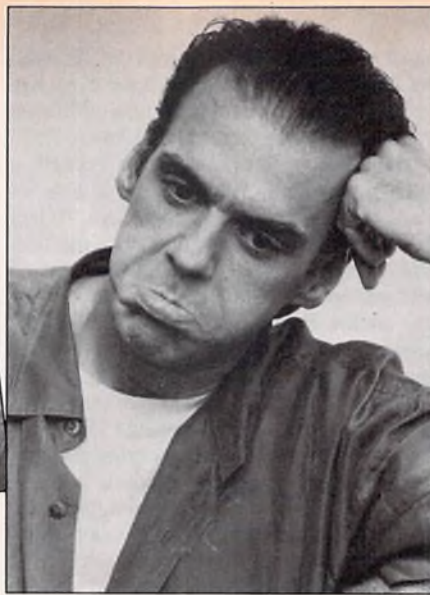
It had been 26 years since the Rolling Stones came to play when Mayor Richie Daley declared "2120 S. Michigan Avenue Day" in honor of Chess Records and in recognition of the studio's landmark status. In the nondescript, brick building up the street from Al Capone's headquarters, the City threw a party to kick off the Chicago Blues Festival and to call attention to the "Chicago sound." James Mack, president of the local NARAS chapter and head of the music department at Harold Washington College, presented NARAS Governors awards to Phil Chess and producer Ralph Bass, reminding Bass that he was still owed \$37.80 for his work on Dee Clark's "Rain Drops." On a more serious note, Mack revealed his "secret agenda: to return Chicago to the forefront of the recording and live-music scenes."

In attendance were Marshall Chess, Leonard's son, who was the first head of Rolling Stones Records but couldn't keep up with the lifestyle of the Glimmer Twins; Sunnyland Slim, who pulled Muddy Waters off a delivery truck for his first recording session; harpist Corky Siegal, who popped into the studio with his partner Jim Schwall 25 years ago looking for a deal and was offered an immediate session; guitarist Buddy Guy; the twin Bruces of Chicago's independent recording scene, Kaplan of Flying Fish and Iglauer of Alligator; Gene Barge, the famed saxophonist Daddy G of "Quarter Till Three"; songwriter/a&r man Willie Dixon with his manager Scott Cameron; members of the Dells and the Chi-Lites, and Andy McKaie, producer of MCA's Chess reissue program.

The Chess Brothers, Leonard and Phil, began the label in 1947 as a sideline to record the bluesmen that played in their bar. This was a rough and tumble world where Buicks took the place of royalties, payola was a business expense, not a felony, and one of your artists might be found with his throat cut. The label's catalog reflected the changing tastes of black urban America—electrified Delta blues, rock & roll, soul, and funk-jazz—inspired dozens of American and British bands, including the Rolling Stones, who recorded *12×5* (ABKCO 4201) there with its instrumental jam, "2120 S. Michigan Avenue." And the party ended with a jam session—"Wang Dang Doodle," played by guitarists Buddy Guy and Johnny Twist, who played on Koko Taylor's original recording in that very same room. —Dave Helland



JOHN HIATT



# Warming Up To The INFO AGE

By Josef Woodard

**O**n the deceptively tiny set of *Late Night With David Letterman*, John Hiatt is strapped into his '57 Telecaster, running down a version of his new tune, "Child Of The Wild Blue Yonder," with the world's most dangerous house band. Guitarist Sid McGinnis dots Hiatt's vocal lines with double-stop riffing and guest David Sanborn puts sax sauce on the chorus going out. The ever-wily Will Lee shuffles around, tossing off bass riffs; as Hiatt tests the mic with a swampy holler, Lee instinctively matches the swamp quotient with a snarling "bad to the bone" lick, and later the signature six-note opening riff to "Thing Called Love," the Hiatt song which Bonnie Raitt has recently helped to plant in the public's ear.

But Hiatt is too focused on details of the performance to play along with Lee's riff-goosing. He wants to make sure the guitar amp is putting out the proper tonal message, and that the band is catching the minor VI-to-V chord punch.

Relaxed and yet vigilant, a purr disguising a growl, Hiatt is that rarity: an outsider who flirts with the main arteries of show business but keeps his cool. A few short years ago, Hiatt was known mainly to a cult following as a crafty, wise-guy maker of songs. Now, he does the Letterman show and, thanks partly to the Grammy-fed rise of Raitt, the release of his latest album, *Stolen Moments*, is greeted with a lot more open ears than ever before.

Since releasing *Hangin' Around The Observatory* in 1974, Hiatt has been lurking around the periphery of the pop music neighborhood, a stubbly genius in the back alley. With his new album, Hiatt has crept his way up to the 10-album mark, and there's not a clinker in the lot. It's not so much Hiatt's gruff vocal style that has won the hearts of his stubborn clutch of fans (which includes a goodly amount of musicians—Elvis Costello, Raitt, John Doe, Marti Jones, and others have cut his tunes). No, Hiatt's tenacious reputation has mainly to do with his high ranking amongst those reviving the lost art of songsmithing.

His discography has been slow and steady, the opposite trajectory of most pop acts, who peak early only to plummet into obscurity. "For sure," Hiatt says of pop's quick-fix tendency in his NBC dressing room just before going on the air, "they burst upon the scene and dip way down later. I appreciate that they've let me sort of go at my own pace," he erupts with a laugh. "Learn as you earn. If it were too much too soon, I think I would have taken the bait on that way. I was certainly a prime candidate. I'm glad it worked out." Hoosier understatement is doing the talking.

"Stolen Moments" (no relation to the Oliver Nelson jazz standard) is based on more than a cliché, as is often the case with Hiatt's thematically loaded songs. Like a man coming to grips with the nature of things, he sings on the title tune, "Don't you know we're living in stolen moments/You steal enough it feels like we're stopping time." Could the title also pertain to the transitory nature of songs—Hiatt's stock in trade—themselves?

"Songs, in general? Hmm. I had another take on it. The other day, somebody had been listening to the album and was saying that it's a joyful record and yet there's some real introspective, *down* stuff on it. I thought, 'Yeah, that's what the stolen moments are all about—it's that distillation of the little drops of joy that we get,'" he sticks his tongue out, " 'little drops on the tongue.'"

**J**udging from the shift in the outlook of his songs, Hiatt seems to be circling around to sanity and a sense of the generational scheme. Boasting a biological clean slate after a life of bad habits, Hiatt seems more resigned to simple domestic pleasures rather than the "steady buzz" consciousness.

Raised an Indianapolis boy, Hiatt found in songwriting a creative solace from life as a not-particularly socially-integrated and pudgy teen. What else does a poor songsmith boy do but head to Nashville? He rose from a \$25/week staff writer job to selling songs to Tracy Nelson and Three Dog Night, but soon angled into a solo career which brought him to Los Angeles.

After eight years in L. A., during which his reputation scaled upward in new wave music circles, and just following his critically well-received album, *Warming Up To The Ice Age*, Hiatt fled the SoCal scene for his former home. "I was just kind of whipped," he recalls. "I wanted to go back to Nashville. Mainly I moved because I had a one-year-old daughter and I was a single parent all of a sudden—my wife died. I didn't think I had a shot in hell in Los Angeles. I came back to Nashville and met my new wife there. Best move I ever made.

"I wasn't even thinking of my career. I was just thinking about what sense of humor the big kahoona must have to stick a one-year-old girl with a knucklehead like me," he laughs. "I was trying to work that one out and see if I could catch his or her drift. That kept me pretty busy. The career didn't have much sway over my thinking."

But Hiatt's hiatus wasn't destined to take root. The inveterate songwriter inside of him began churning. The aptly-entitled *Bring The Family* was a potent return to action. Hiatt brought "the

family" into his songs, and honestly touched on fears as well as flexing his fiendish ways with wordplay. Hiatt is nothing if not grizzled rocker and a softy at heart.

Did his return to Nashville change his outlook as a songwriter, now more reflective than ironic? "Certainly less ironic. I wanted to start talking about the way I felt about things, what was important to me, and start putting it on vinyl. Part of that was the effect that Nashville had on me. I remember when I first got there with my daughter and I'm thinking, 'You better write some songs because this is a songwriter's town. You better get going.' I was writing stuff like 'Lipstick Sunset,' which was kind of reflective and kind of melancholy, but hopeful at the same time."

That fragile emotional balance pretty well sums up what makes *Stolen Moments* tick. From a technical standpoint, the album came together in a way unique to Hiatt. For one thing, he had the luxury of time (two months in the studio) and the overdub process. "We wanted to change up our approach a little bit, get out of the four-piece band format. We used to use the Blue Note approach—bring a small band in and just capture the performance, just sort of like having your picture taken. We wanted to get a little more into the," he searches for the right word, grins, "phonography process. *Bring The Family* and *Slow Turning* both had very little overdubbing. That was the idea: what you play is what you get."

**T**hat characteristic Hiatt straightforwardness and presence of American musical roots isn't lost, but the end result is an album of varied textures and arrangement approaches. Among the top-drawer players were session guitarist Michael Landau, keyboardist Billy Payne, and drummer Richie Hayward from Little Feat. ("They got me through the '70s," Hiatt says of the band.)

Hiatt tends to downplay his own intuitive fluency on guitar, which producer Glyn Johns coaxed out of him on the new album. Generally speaking, Hiatt's music is guitar-friendly, full of parts that sound fresh and familiar at the same time. On his recent albums, especially, Hiatt has shown a clear tendency to sidle up to slide guitar. Ry Cooder supplied the elegant slide juice on 1987's *Bring The Family*. Among the slide players on the new album is the unorthodox slide legend Mac Gayden.

Why slide? "It seems to work with my voice. I mean, I do like it, don't get me wrong. But I never set out saying, 'Hmm, let's get some slide guitar players on this thing.' It just seems to happen."

For the touring unit, Hiatt has hired on Dave Tronzo, the rapidly-rising New York slide player who has been burning up the new music-rock-fusion circuit. Hiatt lights up at the mention of Tronzo. "Do you know him? He's a wacko. He's way out there." Will he reel himself in to suit Hiatt's material? "I don't think so," Hiatt laughs. "I think we're going to pitch ourselves out. I like playing with guys that have a lot more to offer than the gig calls for, because it leaves open a lot of room to experiment."

From all reports, Hiatt isn't an authoritarian singer/songwriter with an ironclad blueprint for his music. On the new album, for instance, Johns served as an editor, helping Hiatt to put his best foot forward.

#### JOHN HIATT'S EQUIPMENT

Hiatt swears by his '57 Telecaster, which he first played on *Riding With The King* and was presented with by producer Nick Lowe. "I feel most comfortable on this Tele. It's a good instrument for what I play, which is a type of rhythmic thing, two- or three-note riffs." For amps, he uses a '66 Fender Pro Reverb and a blonde Fender Bandmaster. The most high-tech item on his list is a TC Chorus unit, but he uses it only as a stereo splitter and for its incidental boost. On the album, he also used a Peavey 212, Vox AC 130's, and a Gibson Stereo Vibrato amp. For acoustic guitars, Hiatt has a 1947 Gibson LG 2, a Gibson J-100, and a Gibson Chet Atkins model solid body.

#### JOHN HIATT SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

<i>STOLEN MOMENTS</i> —A&M 75021 5310	<i>ALL OF A SUDDEN</i> —(out of print)
<i>SLOW TURNING</i> —A&M 5206	<i>TWO BIT MONSTERS</i> —MCA 31359
<i>BRING THE FAMILY</i> —A&M 5158	<i>SLUG LINE</i> —MCA 31358
<i>WARMING UP TO THE ICE AGE</i> —Getten 24055	<i>OVERCOATS</i> —(out of print)
<i>RIDING WITH THE KING</i> —Getten 4017	<i>HANGIN' AROUND THE OBSERVATORY</i> —(out of print)

"I don't have any big picture of what I have to do or what these songs mean, or have some musical vision that I have to get on tape. I'm much more up for getting a bunch of people's ideas together and seeing what comes out of that. For me, that's part of the process. Someone might come in and say, 'Maybe we don't need to do this song. Maybe we've already done this song three or four times.' Then I realize, 'Well, yeah, I sort of have.' At that point, I'm willing to either move on or experiment with it. That's part of the fun.

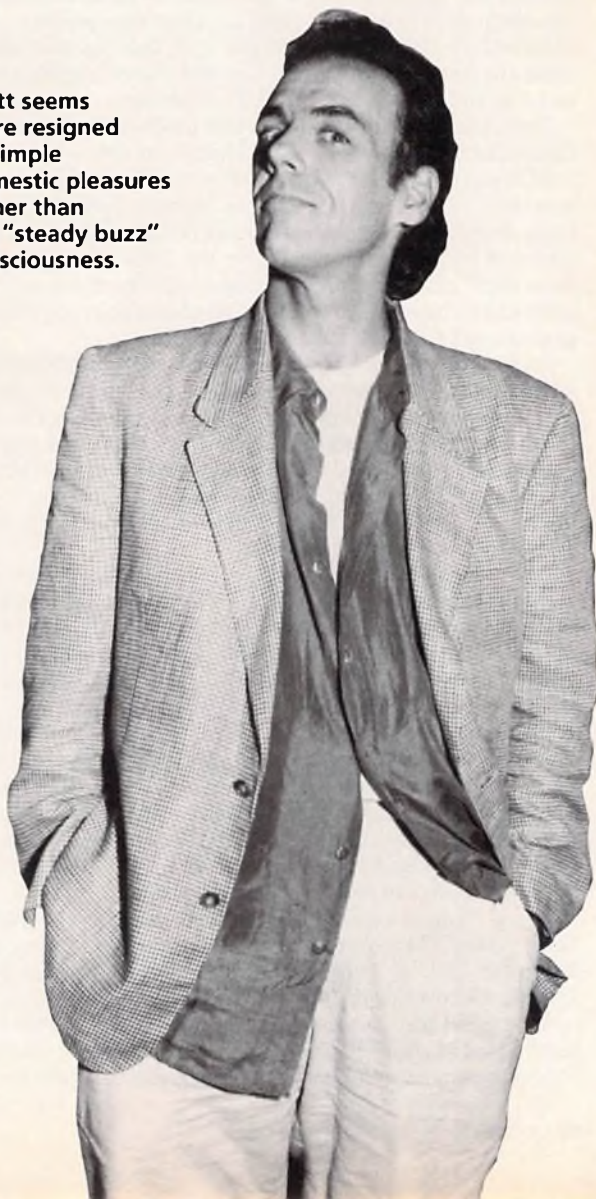
"For instance, we sort of consciously left out the sort of greasy, 12-bar thing, like 'Memphis In The Meantime' or 'It Will Come To Me.' We know how to do that. I can certainly write those kinds of songs, but I just wanted to try some other kinds of ideas."

The subject of music itself crops up in his songs, such as the new tune "Rock Back Billy," about a proud, impoverished veteran guitarist who never quite caught the gravy train. Who is Billy, if anybody? "It's a kind of composite, about any knucklehead who picked up a block of wood with wires and, for some reason, couldn't put it back down," Hiatt laughs. "It's always interesting to me to see how far a person will go, how far they'll compromise. I thought this character was interesting. He would play bass, even though he was a guitar player, but he wouldn't wear the vest. He'll only go so far."

Does that profile describe John Hiatt?

"I would say it definitely describes me, in that it's something I would be doing whether I had an audience for it or not. I would do it on its terms, and have done it on its terms rather than mine." For now, the terms are reverting back to the artist. **DB**

Hiatt seems more resigned to simple domestic pleasures rather than the "steady buzz" consciousness.



PHOTOS BY ENID FARBBER

**S**parked by the international acclaim of Wynton Marsalis, the fountain of youth continues to flood the jazz world with young titans, sprouting these days like dandelions after a spring rain. "They're coming out of the woodwork," says Dizzy Gillespie, who, like Art Blakey and Betty Carter, hires them.

But they're more than just sidemen. They're leading their own groups and headlining their own shows with equally young sidemen. There's nothing new about that, or, at least, nothing you haven't already read in this magazine for years. **DOWN BEAT** has observed this phenomenon through its "Auditions" column and its extensive coverage of young artists. It has also contributed to the movement through such programs as the **DOWN BEAT** Student Music Awards and by hosting Musicfest, U.S.A., one of the nation's premier student music festivals. Musicfest U.S.A. has served as a springboard for such talents as keyboardist Joey De Francesco, saxophonist Christopher Hollyday, trumpeter Roy Hargrove, keyboardist Vernell Brown, and bassist Christian McBride.

But suddenly, the youth movement has migrated

Marsalis, and bassist Reginald Veal. . . .

**I**n part, you can blame Columbia's George Butler, who discovered Marsalis, for this parade of babes. His aim of signing young artists was so he could attract younger record buyers. He first tried it with fusion in the '70s when he worked for Blue Note and signed artists like Earl Klugh.

"After a few years, everyone started to sound alike, while the real jazz greats were being ignored. Fusion only represented three or four chord changes," Butler states. "There was very little to do to show how talented you were. I thought it was time to focus on this music called jazz. And one of the ways to make music appealing to young people is to sign young artists. I went and found Wynton Marsalis in New Orleans."

Since Charlie Parker, never has one jazz artist been as instrumental in drawing young blood to jazz as Marsalis. For years, he has evangelized schools and colleges, earning himself

By James T. Jones IV

# NEW Cats ON THE

from jazz journals to the mainstream media. The world is finally noticing that musicians on the bandstand are sometimes not old enough to drink in the very clubs for which they perform.

*Billboard*, the *Washington Post*, and *USA Today* have all talked about the young upstarts. The *New York Times Magazine* has raved about them. So has ABC TV's *Nightline*.

Steve Backer of RCA/Novus, which handles Roy Hargrove, Christopher Hollyday, and pianist Marcus Roberts—all current frontrunners in the youth movement—is ecstatic about the media attention. "Think about how old Lee Morgan, Jackie McLean, and Louis Armstrong were when they reached a tremendously proficient level: late teens and early 20s. They were great, but some didn't get commercial acceptance until later, too late in some cases. Now, you've got the living benefiting, and they're getting a great deal of commercial response."

In fact, RCA's Novus has netted high-charting *Billboard* hits with Hargrove's *Diamond In The Rough* (see "Reviews" July '90), Hollyday's *On Course* (July '90), and Roberts' *Deep In The Shed* (June '90). Polygram topped *Billboard's* jazz chart with the young quintet Harper Brothers' *Live At The Village Vanguard* (Mar. '90). Columbia has sold tens of thousands of albums with the Marsalises, De Francesco, and pianist Harry Connick, Jr., who has taken jazz into the pop charts.

The youngsters are now calling the shots as labels rush to the young, the gifted, and the jazzy. GRP and Atlantic as well as RCA's Novus courted Hargrove, he says, before he decided to sign with Novus; 15-year-old saxophonist Shawn "Thunder" Wallace has recorded *The New And The Old* on the Mijawa label. CBS's Columbia is still zealously snapping up young lions, including guitarist Dwight Sills, who has recorded his self-titled album with Columbia. Even GRP, known for its fusion and pop/jazz acts, has jumped on the bandwagon with 13-year-old Amani A.W.-Murray (also a Musicfest graduate), one of the youngest of the lions. He plays sax on the "Charlie Brown Theme" from the album *Happy Anniversary, Charlie Brown!* (see "Reviews" Jan. '90), and he plans to record a solo bebop album.

Bebop "is quite a sophisticated form of music," says GRP's Larry Rosen. "That's why I was so astonished by Murray, and had to sign him. We're having a lot of young players coming around rediscovering the history, and doing it all over again."

And the list goes on: saxophonist Craig Handy; Nathan Berg, bassist with Maynard Ferguson; pianist Julian Joseph, singer Tim Owens, trumpeter Jeff Beal, trombonist/producer Delfeayo

the title piper of jazz. "It's important to pass on the information, that way they'll know it," says Marsalis. "You always want each generation to get stronger."

"By and large, I think [he] deserves a lot of credit," says Nat Hentoff, jazz critic for the *Village Voice*. "I never found his music moving, but Wynton certainly found the way to move these younger guys. He comes with the kind of authority you would expect from people when they are 80. He's been preaching roots, respect, and understanding for years. He became so successful, he showed these guys you don't have to be fusion or have to sell out one way or another."

**ALUMNI REUNION:** Whitfield, Hollyday, Hargrove, and De Francesco as featured in the *New York Times Magazine*.





Antonio Hart, '89 Musicfest U.S.A. Finals

Geoff Keezer

# BLOCK

Christian McBride and Mom, '89 Musicfest U.S.A. finals.



ANTHONY BARBOSA

# ALUMNI Cats

**DOWN BEAT** continues to pride itself on finding and fostering talented, young musicians. And, through Musicfest, U.S.A., our "Auditions" column, and the Student Music Awards, the "DB's", we've had an opportunity to see (and hear) firsthand some of the best around. Here are a few distinguished graduates of Musicfest and the "DB's" that you probably already know. And we're sure that more will be coming out of the woodwork in the years ahead.

## Vernell Brown Jr.

*age:* 19  
*weapon:* Keyboards  
*education:* Hamilton High School, Los Angeles  
*leader:* *A Total Eclipse*, A&M  
*awards:* 1989 Musicfest All-Star, in Gold Award-winning ensemble, \$12,500 in scholarship offers; several **DOWN BEAT** Student Music Awards ("DB's"); finalist, Monk Competition, 1988 and 1989

## Joey De Francesco

*age:* 19  
*weapon:* Hammond B-3  
*education:* High School of Creative and Performing Arts, Philadelphia  
*sideman with:* Miles, Houston Person  
*leader:* Two Columbia releases  
*awards:* 1987-89 Musicfest All-Star, in Gold Award-winning ensemble, awarded full scholarship to Berklee College; semi-finalist, 1988 Monk Competition

## Roy Hargrove

*age:* 20  
*weapon:* Trumpet  
*education:* Dallas Arts Magnet High School; Berklee College, Boston; New School, New York City  
*sideman with:* Bobby Watson, James Moody  
*leader:* *Diamond In The Rough*, RCA/Novus  
*awards:* 1987-88 Musicfest All-Star, in Gold Award-winning ensemble, awarded full scholarship to Berklee College; numerous "DB's"; IAJE Young Talent Award, '87

## Christopher Hollyday

*age:* 20  
*weapon:* Alto Saxophone  
*education:* Norwood (Mass.) High School; New School, New York City  
*leader:* Two RCA/Novus releases  
*sideman with:* Maynard Ferguson  
*awards:* 1989 Musicfest All-Star, New School scholarship winner; several "DB's"; IAJE, '85

## Delfeayo Marsalis

*age:* 22  
*weapons:* Trombone, mixing board  
*education:* Benjamin Franklin H.S. and the New Orleans Center for the Creative Arts; Berklee College of Music, Boston  
*sideman:* Marcus Roberts, Fats Domino  
*producer:* Ellis, Wynton, and Branford Marsalis; Courtney Pine; Marcus Roberts; Harry Connick, Jr.  
*awards:* Gold Award, 1989 Musicfest with No Corporate Rubbish

## Christian McBride

*age:* 18  
*weapon:* Bass  
*education:* High School of Creative and Performing Arts, Philadelphia; Juilliard School, New York City  
*sideman with:* Roy Hargrove, Free Flight, Wallace Roney  
*awards:* 1987-89 Musicfest All-Star; in Gold Award-winning ensemble, \$7,000 in scholarship offers

## Amani A. W.-Murray

*age:* 13  
*weapon:* Saxophone  
*education:* Bronx High School of Science, New York City  
*leader:* upcoming on GRP  
*awards:* 1989 Musicfest All-Star

**T**he young, generally male lions are mostly straightahead players, lovers of acoustic instrumentation. Even pianist Vernell Brown Jr., who recorded the fusion effort, *A Total Eclipse* with A&M (see "Reviews" June '90), admits, "I can sit in with the traditional guys and can play with them, if not better," pointing out how he does fusion only so he can stand out from the "flood of young beboppers."

By in large, though, the young arrivals make no apologies for restating the hard-bop of the '50s, the bebop of the '40s, and in the case of Roberts, pre-bebop and blues. They're not trying to revolutionize jazz. "We're just trying to learn our history," says drummer Winard Harper of the Harper Brothers.

Says saxophonist Tony Hart, 21: "Before you can even think about going forward, you have to have a complete understanding of tradition. A house without the foundation is going to fall."

Attending their performances is like stepping into a time warp. Those like guitarist Mark Whitfield, 23, who has just signed with Warner Bros. and is putting out *The Marksman* in September, are shunning pickups and amps. "My guitar has an acoustic sound. I'd rather you hear that. It's a prettier sound. Most of the guitar players I check out use their amps to compensate for their lack of sensitivity and touch. It's an easier way to get a sound, a crutch."

Their dress is a throwback to the '40s: wing-tip shoes, colorful ties, and natty, gangster-styled suits—oversized and padded often at the shoulders, with long coats that dip below the buttocks.

The sidemen are as equally young—and talented—as the leaders. Hargrove has been touring with saxophonist Hart and bassist Christian McBride, 18. Jordan's group includes pianist Peter Martin (19), drummer Troy Davis (24), bassist Tarus Mateen (22), and saxophonist Tim Warfield (22). Hollyday travels with Larry Goldings (20), piano, and drummer Ron Savage (25).

These young musicians try to recapture the bebop era with their music, and their lingo—"cat" and "that's cool"—but they're a different breed. "Betty [Carter] always told me, learn from the masters, but don't try to be them," says pianist Benny Green,

27, who signed with Blue Note and has released his debut, *Lineage*. For one, they're clean-cut and drug-free. Says pianist Stephen Scott, 20, who has a solo album due out in September on Polygram: "Most cats don't even drink, much less anything else."

And where most of the bebop generation learned on the street, these guys do much of their woodshedding in the hallowed halls of colleges and universities. "They're a lot more educated than when I was coming up," says Dizzy Gillespie. "They're going to school; they're learning how to write. When I was coming up, few guys knew how to read."

There are now more than 400 schools that offer degrees in jazz, and about 40 that offer degrees at the master and Ph.D. level. They are turning out composers as well as players. Young players' albums include more originals than standards. Those like Roberts' have whole albums of originals.

**T**he older guys have "made it so much easier for the young cats to learn," says De Francesco, 19, who has put out his second effort, *Where Were You?* on Columbia (see "Reviews" June '90). "They had to invent the stuff. We just buy a record and learn."

Vernell Brown Jr. feels education is very important and plans to major in classical composition at Cal State University in Northridge, Ca., next spring. "I've talked to a lot of professional musicians that have made it and they say they wish they had gone ahead and got a degree. It's good just in case you want something to fall back on. I'd feel good mentally having something like a degree."

Education is good, "just to better myself as a human being, to have an academic background," Brown asserts. "You can communicate better, talk about politics. This is a money-making business, and you need to know how to handle your money. And I think a music education is important—just to have the technical aspect. It's like a brain tool. It gives you something to exercise your brain."





Still, there are those who feel they're being passed over, period. The success and publicity of the young lions has angered an older generation of musicians that fest promoter George Wein calls the "lost generation," those like Ron Carter, James Williams, and saxophonist Bobby Watson.

"You either have to be 22-and-under or 75-and-over in order to receive any acclaim for your artistry these days," says pianist Williams, 39. Musicians in between "are overlooked as being unmarketable by the major record companies, by the promoters and certain agencies, and to a certain degree by club owners."

The older musicians were first pushed aside in the '70s when fusion was hot. "Those like James Williams came up when Spyro Gyra [was hot], whereas, I don't have to compete with Spyro," says Mark Whitfield. It seems ironic that, in the '90s, this "lost generation" is again being pushed aside, but now by the very youngsters that many have tutored. Williams calls it a double-edged sword. "It's great to see these young musicians playing. Bud Powell, Jimmy Blanton, Clifford Brown all started young. They're talented, but nowhere close to being leaders. Just leading a band is more than getting on stage and announcing the tunes. It's being able to get the musicians, inspire them, to pace the set, even choose the right musicians. Just having a bunch of musicians on stage doesn't make an ensemble."

Says bassist Carter: "At age 19, how many notes have you played, many mistakes have you corrected? They haven't paid enough dues. They're being treated with kid gloves."

Even Wynton admits many of them may not be ready. "I'm glad that they are having a chance to record, but a lot of times the imagery they put out has nothing to do with substance," he says. "[It's] about getting a suit or getting X-amount of dollars.

"[I would] like to see them recording with other people. . . . Ron Carter told me very directly you're not ready at 20 years old to be out here on the road with a band. I couldn't see what he was saying, but now at 28," Marsalis realizes, "I can see what he was saying."

Hollyday doesn't agree with his older peers. "It's not necessarily age, but knowledge. I went to clubs at an early age. I was forced to mature."

Besides, "it's impossible to make a living if you're not going to record," says Whitfield. "Let's give some young cats a chance."

And, the cast of young players are getting that chance, not only on recordings, but in clubs such as Blues Alley in Washington, D.C. "The record companies are behind the young people," says Ralph Camili, booking agent for Blues Alley. "They . . . pay for additional advertising and buy tickets for their shows.

"And the crowd is getting its money's worth with these young guys. It's certainly refreshing to see young players on stage, fighting to play a solo. Unfortunately, that's not always the case with the more established players; we have to fight to keep them on the stage."

Young people may be doing well in the clubs, but they're having a tougher time in the concert situation, says Wein. "The older [concert goers] are not interested in young people and the younger ones are not interested in jazz. But there's an obligation as a promoter to bring new blood to concerts; this young blood better reach the public if we want jazz to survive. They're getting critical reviews, but haven't had commercial success, yet.

"One of the problems is that they don't appear to be having fun on stage. They're very serious, too serious. Jazz has always been a fun music. The younger fellows just haven't gone through what older musicians have gone through—big bands, being out there every night, learning about show business and how to swing," Wein states. "These kids are so talented and play so beautifully; they have to generate a public outside jazz for their music."

Carter feels they just need to be sidemen first with older musicians who can teach them. "Miles started with Bird [Charlie Parker], Clifford [Brown] with Max [Roach]. Who have these guys played with besides their own bands? What have they learned?"

Trumpeter Marlon Jordan, 19, who debuts on Columbia with *For You Only* (see "Reviews" Aug. '90), is content with his own band (average age: 22). "I didn't want people who were already grown. I wanted people to mature with me as I mature."

Pianist Geoff Keezer, 19, thinks the older players have a point. Though he has released two solo albums, he wants to continue playing piano for drummer Art Blakey. "Once all the masters are gone, inevitably, we will have to lead our own bands; but as long as we have Art [Blakey], Jackie [McLean], Art Farmer, I would like to get that experience first."

Yet, he empathizes with his peers. "You can't learn how to play in your own band, but there are not too many opportunities for [us] as sidemen. Nowadays, you have to create your own situation."

Older vets like Benny Carter and Milt Hinton are coming to the rescue, taking youngsters under their wings, via seminars and scholarships, like grandfathers tutoring grandsons. Hinton teaches master classes at universities. "These young guys are enlightening. It's a young world. Each generation has to do better than the generation before us. I'm just glad to see these young people getting over. They're going to carry it on." DB

Christopher Hollyday and Marlon Jordan



The following is a list of available new titles from artists mentioned in the story:

- Vernell Brown Jr., *A TOTAL ECLIPSE*—A&M 7502-15305
- Harry Connick Jr., *LOFTY'S ROACH SOUFFLE*—Columbia 46223
- Harry Connick Jr., *WE ARE IN LOVE*—Columbia 46146
- Joey De Francesco, *WHERE WERE YOU?*—Columbia 45443
- Benny Green, *LINEAGE*—Blue Note 93670
- Roy Hargrove, *DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH*—Novus 3082
- Harper Brothers, *LIVE AT THE VILLAGE VANGUARD*—Polygram 841 723
- Christopher Hollyday, *ON COURSE*—Novus 3087
- Geoff Keezer, *CURVEBALL*—Sunnyside 1045D
- Amani A.W.-Murray, *GRP*—to be released
- Marcus Roberts, *DEEP IN THE SHED*—Novus 3078
- Stephen Scott, *Polygram*—to be released
- Dwight Sills, *DWIGHT SILLS*—Columbia 46089

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



## PAT METHENY/ROY HAYNES/DAVE HOLLAND

**QUESTION AND ANSWER**—Geffen 9 24293-2: SOLAR; QUESTION AND ANSWER; H&H; NEVER TOO LATE; LAW YEARS; CHANGE OF HEART; ALL THE THINGS YOU ARE; OLD FOLKS; THREE FLIGHTS UP. (62:54 minutes)

**Personnel:** Metheny, guitar; Haynes, drums; Holland, bass.

★★★★★

Of the three Pat Metheny guitar trio albums, this one is by far the best. Jauntier and more exciting than 1984's *Rejoicing* with Charlie Haden and Billy Higgins, more seasoned and swinging than Pat's 1976 debut *Bright Size Life* with Jaco Pastorius and Bob Moses, *Question And Answer* is Metheny's take on a Jim Hall date.

Using a warm, muted tone throughout the nine cuts here, Metheny burns on a low flame, spurred on by the high degree of interplay and sense of adventure he achieves with Roy Haynes and Dave Holland, an empathetic rhythm section whose broken patterns imply rather than state the underlying tempo.

Though this album features some of Metheny's most inspired playing on record, particularly on an uptempo rendition of "All The Things You Are" and Ornette Coleman's "Law Years," it is drummer Haynes who stands out as the star of the session. From cut to cut, his choices are so surprising, his quicksilver statements so astounding, his ears so big that he pulls the proceedings to higher ground. And because Metheny's guitar and Holland's bass tones are so round and warm, every little cymbal nuance or snare fill that Roy employs jumps out at you in the mix. This kind of drums-up-front approach really allows you to appreciate the brilliance of the man whom Metheny calls "the father of modern drumming."

Check out Roy's interplay with Pat on Miles Davis' "Solar" as he skitters around the melody, cracks the snare at odd times and generally explores with abandon while never sacrificing the pulse. Or hear his exchanges with Holland on the Metheny-penned "H&H." His choices are always so *right*. On ballads like "Old Folks" and two Metheny waltzes, "Change Of Heart" and "Never Too Far Away," Roy dances jauntily with brushes, exhibiting his inimitable light touch and quick mind. This album is a must for drummers. And guitarists. No sappy pop arrangements geared for the Wave format, no Brazilian romps, no techno distractions. Just an hour of unadulterated, interactive playing by three greats in an intimate club-like setting.

A superb session indeed. (reviewed on CD)

—Bill Milkowski



## JAMES BROWN

**LIVE AT THE APOLLO, 1962**—Polydor 843 479-2: I'LL GO CRAZY; TRY ME; THINK; I DON'T MIND; LOST SOMEONE; PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE; YOU'VE GOT THE POWER; I FOUND SOMEONE; WHY DO YOU DO ME; I WANT YOU SO BAD; I LOVE YOU YES I DO; WHY DOES EVERYTHING HAPPEN TO ME; BEWILDERED; PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE; NIGHT TRAIN. (31:36 minutes)

**Personnel:** Brown, vocals; Bobby Byrd, background vocals and organ (cut 5); Bobby Bennett, Lloyd Stallworth, background vocals; Louis Hamblin, trumpet and music director; Teddy Washington, Mack Johnson, trumpet; St. Clair Pinckney, Al "Brisco" Clark, tenor sax; Dickie Wells, trombone; Lucas "Fats" Gonder, organ, emcee; Les Buie, guitar; Hubert Perry, bass; Clayton Fillyau, Sam Latham, drums.

★★★★★

The Godfather of Soul is the Godfather of so much rock and pop that there's no point in trying to spell out what we all owe him in a couple of hundred words. Let's just leave it at this: without James Brown's brilliant insight into how to foreground rhythms, music from funk to reggae to rap to Afro-pop would be totally different, if it existed at all.

Of course, there are periods to the man's huge body of work, and this classic disc, recorded on October 24, 1962, comes from what you could call his early-middle era. Starting mainly as a balladeer, he was moving more into uptempo material by this point. He was still a couple of years away from the backbone-snapping discoveries of cuts like "Out Of Sight," "I Got You," and "I Got The Feelin'" that would whipsaw cross-rhythms with a relentless grin, and in the process create funk singlehandedly.

Even though it predates that incredibly influential period, *Live* is a classic among JB freaks partly because it captures the Hardest Working Man In Show Business in his natural milieu—on stage, in front of a crowd. When I interviewed him a few years back, Brown explained that he always liked his live cuts best because, as he put it, "In the studio we have to slow down so people can understand us when what we record goes out over the radio; but live my bands always talk very, very fast." (Ironically, Brown funded *Live* out of his own pocket, because King Records prez Syd Nathan, a typical early rock & roll singles maven, couldn't believe there was a market for a live album.

Even more ironically, *Live At The Apollo* spent a legendary 66 weeks at the top of the *Billboard* pop LP charts.)

*Live* lets you hear what Brown means by talking fast. The way the medley jumpcuts, the way "Please, Please, Please" drifts in and out as the set's structural motif, the way the pumping beats of "Night Train" foreshadow the coiled funk to come, the way the band keys off that torn scream of a voice—there was, quite simply, no one else able to hear the way JB could hear in '62. Now reissued with the original front and back covers and solid historical annotations gracing the CD booklet, digitally remastered to an airier sheen, *Live* proves that, once again. (reviewed on CD)

—Gene Santoro



## ETTA JAMES

**STICKIN' TO MY GUNS**—Island 842 926-2: WHATEVER GETS YOU THROUGH THE NIGHT; LOVE TO BURN; THE BLUES DON'T CARE; YOUR GOOD THING (IS ABOUT TO END); GET FUNKY; BEWARE; OUT OF THE RAIN; STOLEN AFFECTION; A FOOL IN LOVE; I'VE GOT DREAMS TO REMEMBER. (40:06 minutes)

**Personnel:** James, vocals; Roger Hawkins, drums; Michael Rhodes, bass; Barry Beckett, Jim Pugh, keyboards; Reggie Young, Leo Nocentelli (cuts 5,6), Arik Marshall (1,2), lead guitar; Mabon "Teenie" Hodges, Danny Rhodes, Gary Burnette, guitar; Mike Lawler, synthesizer; Jim Horn, Michael Haynes, Jack Hale, Quitman Dennis, horns; Carl Marsh, Fairlight III programming; Ashley Cleveland, Jonell Mosser, Carol Chase, Thomas Cain, Dobie Gray, background vocals; Greg "Smacky" Donerson, percussion (5); Gene Dinwiddie, tenor sax (9); Fernando Pullum, trumpet (3,5); David L. Patterson, tenor and baritone saxes (3,5); John Dewey McKnight, trombone (3,5); Bobby Vega, bass (5); Def Jef, rap vocals (5); Jimmie Wood, harmonica (7); Josh Sklair, rhythm & lead guitars (3,8).

★★★★★

One of the fundamental lessons great gospel/soul/blues singers learn right off is encapsulated in the phrase, "If you can't feel it, don't sing it." Seems that's where most fly-by-night pop vocalists take the wrong turn and end up with one-hit, flash-in-the-pan careers. Then there's Etta James, who has powerhouse into her fourth decade of belting out the blues with an impressive new album. *Stickin' To My Guns* is a gritty, cut-to-the-bone-of-raw-emotion collection of tunes that range from a rocking, knock-down-the-walls remake of Ike and Tina's 1960 hit, "A Fool In Love," to the contemporary dance track, "Get Funky," filled with loosen-

up, get-down funk rhythms, hip-hop phrasings, racing bass lines, and a feast of percussion that makes the number crackle like a brush fire.

The album title not only refers to James' return to her Stax/Volt soul and blues roots (a process begun with her last album, the critically-acclaimed but poor-selling *Seven Year Lich*), but also attests to the fact that Etta is one dangerous blues diva (witness the album cover). Bottom line, James is a ferocious singer.

She wails with anger and rage on "Your Good Thing (Is About to Come To An End)" and pleads with unrestraint and a forcefulness embedded in a tumble of memory and longing on the Otis Redding ballad "I've Got Dreams To Remember." Her vocals are downright gripping on the cooking r&b opening song, "Whatever Gets You Through The Night," where James assertively demands, "Hey, what time is it when the sun goes down/When the shadows fall and the lonely come around?"

Besides James' vocals, big plusses are the album's crisp sound (veteran Memphis soul producer Barry Beckett steers clear of the slickness that mars most contemporary soul and r&b), Leo Nocentelli's snappin', stutterin' guitar lines on "Beware," the harmonica and church organ accompaniment on the arresting rural Southern blues tune, "Out In The Rain," written by Tony Joe White, and the abundance of soulful Muscle Shoals horn parts. On the down side, many of the guitar solos are both

## REDISCOVERING BILL

by Fred Bouchard

**B**ill Evans died on September 15, 1980, and this decade has been kind to his memory. Praising Evans may be preaching to the converted, and trying to reassess him redundant, but here goes.

When I reflect on Bill Evans at the piano, I recall ballad tempos, quiet dynamics, introspective moods. When I actually listen to the myriad trio recordings between 1955 and 1980, I am slightly surprised to hear far more medium and uptempo tunes, block-chord shouting (well, at least voice-raising), and extroverted discussion than I imagined. (see my review of *Conversations With Myself* in DB's 55th anniv. issue, Sept. '89). Why is that? It's Evans' spiritual focus, intense concentration, and calm purposefulness that smooth matters over in my mind's ear. Yes, and those hidden voicings, freed time constraints, and absolutely transcendent right-hand lines. Time slows in a relativistic curve, as well, when I try to conceive of the interstellar distances his trios traveled in the '60s.

Evans' trio approach was largely responsible for liberating the bass-drum-piano combination from its automaton "rhythm section" role. Early collaborations with bassist Scott LaFaro had much to do with the redefinitions: here was a bass voice Evans could really engage in explorative melodic discussions, not simply pump with questions. Chuck Israels succeeded LaFaro, who died in July of '61, and achieved over five years an even better style mesh with Evans, who wrote of his "bright moving pulse" and how quickly he adapted to "musical interplay." A drummer of subtle sensibilities pointed the triangle: the refined and exemplary Paul Motian, with his floating, India-ink-on-parchment brushstrokes. Evans suggests the listener ignore Motian's drums for a moment to notice the "tremendous vacuum" caused by his absence.

Evans reissues are spinning out slowly, the new Riverside flock including *Moonbeams* (Riverside OJCCD-434-2; 39:00 minutes: ★★★★★½) and *How My Heart Sings!* (369-2; 48:43: ★★★★★). These date from Spring, 1962 not long after disciplined exposure to George Russell's Lydian Concept bred modal playing into the



bone of all three members.

These albums are cut of the same rich fabric, brocaded with golden threads of melody and intriguingly cross-stitched rhythms. They are spliced from the same first sessions that Evans recorded since that fateful Village Vanguard session date that was LaFaro's last. *Moonbeams* recaptures my dream sequence of Evans wafting glorious ballads, some long in his repertoire and recorded before. Dappled versions of "Polka Dots And Moonbeams" and "It Might As Well Be Spring" have proved a nearly inescapable influence on so many pianists since him, for better or worse (as Stravinsky has on so many composers). Nonetheless, *How My Heart Sings!* sounds fresh and sally, like a sea breeze in the face; it may have had to do with the newness of the material and the briskness of the tempos. Ineffable favorites of mine are "I Should Care," the sauntering "Summertime," the sweet, honest singing of "Everything I Love," the elegant descent of "Walking Up," and the chromatic rise of "Show-Type Tune." It also includes one outtake missing on the LP: a second, saucy version of "In Your Own Sweet Way."

Evans and Tony Bennett going at it one-on-one (*The Tony Bennett/Bill Evans Album*, Fantasy OJCCD-439-2; 34:57: ★★★★★) was not an alliance made in heaven, but in Helen Keane's negotiator's mind. As Evans' only stint I've heard accompanying a singer, I can think of pairings I'd have preferred (Irene Kral, Carmen McRae). This was an unusually intimate and contemplative date for the outgoing guy who teamed up with

Blakey and Basie, wowed music-tent and Vegas audiences. Evans is subdued but firmly pulling the beat, soloing briefly and winningly. Bennett sounds warm but wary, reining his wonted expansiveness. Ringing treatments of "Some Other Time" (with "Peace Piece") and "My Foolish Heart" aside, Evans' slight tendency to rush tempos indicates discomfiture.

Evans' influence lives on, percolated through the consciousness of pianists (Fred Hersch, Steve Kuhn, Matt Rollings, and Kenny Werner are examples near my turntable) and affect the clever, sensuous arrangements by Tom Darter for the Kronos Quartet. That whole bands respond to Evans' magic is evident from two fairly obscure releases that tackle original tunes Evans wrote (or played). *The Atlanta All-Star Quartet Plays Bill Evans* (Antelope AR 888; 44:25: ★★★★★½) finds four Georgia pros—pianist Dan Wall, drummer James Martin, bassist Neal Starkey, and alto saxophonist Tony LaVorgna—smoothly riding seven lesser-known Evans originals in a spirited, balanced set. "Show-Type Tune" and "Peri's Scope" are breezy and alert; "Turn Out The Stars" and "My Bells" capture some of the crystal wonderment that informed Evans' musical outlook. Wall's deep understanding of Evans skirts free of excessive adulation. (reviewed on LP)

Le Scott's *Jazz Opera Presents The Bill Evans Memorial Songbook* (ETA-5044; 46:31: ★) shows just how weird influences can get. Two voices act out limp, sick-o scenarios loosely following four Evans tunes and three by Earl Zindars, a percussionist and composer whose tunes Evans has immortalized. Gentle, sophisticated tunes are metamorphosed into Scott's sophomoric rantings, the companionability of his trio sours into self-indulgent foolishness, his magnanimity into whining rancor, and his candor besmirched. Insufferably messy, smirky, negative vocals by Scott, whose horn playing and vocalizing are equally amateurish, and Maria Paris, clear-toned but with a tendency to hoot, bend the perfect strike of Evans' intonation into a pitch-out. "Waltz For Debby" renders an especially appalling treatment of Gene Lees' warm lyrics. Gimme Tony! The skittery, witty piano of Allen Youngblood (reminiscent of Dick Twardzik) all but gets sucked up in the muck. Nature has mushrooms spring forth from excrement, but man in his perversity may reverse the miracle. (reviewed on CD except where noted)

DB

too predictable and too prominent in the mix and the subtle synth washes are superfluous. 1989 was Bonnie Raitt's year to be rediscovered. Etta James, who started singing professionally when Raitt was still a babe and helped to open the r&b league the two both perform in these days, deserves the same for 1990. (reviewed on CD) —*Dan Ouellette*



## MARTY EHRLICH

**THE TRAVELLER'S TALE**—Enja R2 79630: *THE SHORT CIRCLE IN THE LONG LINE; THE RECONSIDERED BLUES; THE TRAVELLER'S TALE; MARCH; ALICE'S WONDERLAND; MELODY FOR MADELEINE; PLOWSHARE PEOPLE; LONNIE'S LAMENT.* (54:31 minutes)

**Personnel:** Ehrlich, soprano, alto saxophone, clarinet, bass clarinet; Stan Strickland, soprano, tenor saxophone, voice; Lindsey Horner, bass; Bobby Previte, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## MARK HELIAS

**DESERT BLUE**—Enja R2 79631: *POLICE STORY BLUES; SKIN; FOURTH WORLD; ALBERT; DESERT BLUE; PITCHFIELD BLUES; PAROUSIA; RUMINATION; MORPHOLOGARHYTHM.* (51:13)

**Personnel:** Helias, bass, Steinberger bass guitar; Herb Robertson, trumpet, cornet; Marty Ehrlich, alto, tenor saxophone, clarinet, bass clarinet; Anthony Davis, piano, synthesizer; Pheeroan akLaff, drums; Ray Anderson, trombone (cuts 2, 9); Jerome Harris, guitar (2, 9).

★ ★ ★ 1/2

These are guys who have played so well as sidemen in so many high-quality sessions that their flexibility might be held against them; the name-dropping, style-conscious listener can't pigeonhole them, and so they fall between the cracks of audience recognition. This is a shame, because both Helias and Ehrlich are experienced, canny leaders too, and worthy of note.

Especially Ehrlich. *The Traveller's Tale* is a vibrant successor to '88's unfairly neglected *Pliant Plaint* (on Enja); the quartet (Horner has replaced Anthony Cox in the interim) has mellowed, grown into a comfortable familiarity and focus. The group's equanimity of voice, considered design, and balance may have been inherited from similarly equated Ornette or Braxton quartets, but Ehrlich and crew put a new spin on what they've learned. Ehrlich's compositions are all attractive, accessible without seeming overly derivative, and develop unexpected twists and multi-tempos. "The Reconsidered Blues," for example, echoes Min-

gus in mood, but Strickland's bluesy vocalizing and Ehrlich's warm clarinet (a still too-rare reed these days) make it their own. The title tune is an attention-grabber, and it's especially nice the way the serpentine alto sax melody is casually interrupted for a probing, out-of-tempo bass solo. "Alice's Wonderland" is not the Disney tune Bill Evans' piano caressed, but a lovely, little-known Mingus ballad which blossoms in these hands. *The Traveller's Tale* reminded me of Dave Holland's *Conference Of The Birds*—an instantly seductive disc which may come to be considered a classic.

Mark Helias' *Desert Blue* is a riskier venture; the wider-ranging styles on display take some chances, but a spark seems missing, like a car just not clicking on all cylinders. On two cuts Helias straps on his Steinberger, and the presence of trombonist Anderson (plus Harris' groove-minded chording) recalls the Slickaphonics, their funny, funky spinoff band—but "Morphologarhythm" is a bland boogaloo. Elsewhere, Herb Robertson glowers and growls to good effect on "Police Story Blues," but like fellow front-liner Ehrlich forgoes the enticing rowdiness they've displayed on other dates. Anthony Davis, too, sounds smooth, suave, and somewhat uninvolved. "Parousia" works best, a waltz with lyrical turns. But I'd recommend Helias' earlier Enja discs, *Split Image* and *The Current Set*, as examples of Helias at his inspiring—and inspired—best. (reviewed on CD) —*Art Lange*



## TUCK ANDRESS

**RECKLESS PRECISION**—Windham Hill WD-0124: *MAN IN THE MIRROR; (SOMEWHERE) OVER THE RAINBOW/IF I ONLY HAD A BRAIN; LOUIE LOUIE; BODY AND SOUL; SWEET P; STELLA BY STARLIGHT; MANONASH; MANHA DE CARNAVAL; GROOVES OF JOY; BEGIN THE BEGUINE.* (49:50 minutes)

**Personnel:** Andress, electric guitar.

★ ★ ★ ★ 1/2

Tuck, minus Patti, is right out in the open, more naked than ever before, and there is no drought of ideas or musical angles with which he hits the listener. In fact, he shines. Andress' own "Sweet P" and "Manonash" are examples of how he explores a melody, building a controlled fire underneath. His reading of Michael Jackson's "Man In The Mirror" has more meat than the original had. "Stella" is a knowing and daring trip around the fretboard. After the extended intro he gets swinging, and the warm low notes really move. Andress' Gibson L5 is recorded beautifully from top to bottom—sounds wonderful on CD—and it's done with-

out an overdub.

Guitarists might well be applauding, but *Reckless Precision* is an album that instrumentalists of all kinds and music lovers of all styles will enjoy. It's all there—rhythm, melody, harmony, improvisation, percussion. He's not leading the league in chops-per-second, and it's not loud, as in brash. Andress accompanies himself incredibly well, but it's through arranging on the instrument rather than one particular style or trick that he is so refreshing and good. He comes from many places. It took me a couple minutes to figure out that one real cool shuffle was "Louie Louie." His single-note lines on "Carnaval" are in such a pocket you forget you're hearing only guitar. The snipped and spliced marathon "Grooves Of Joy" features sections of extreme scampering, circular, evolving patterns, and picks up an edge of gutbucket blues before the fade. The medley from *The Wizard Of Oz* will certainly find soft spots in many baby boomers' hearts. My guess is that *Reckless Precision* will create many soft and empty spots in wallets, and find many CD trays. (reviewed on CD) —*Robin Tolleson*



## JOHN PATITUCCI

**SKETCHBOOK**—GRP 9617: *SPACESHIPS; JOAB; IF YOU DON'T MIND; SCOPHILE; GREATEST GIFT; FROM A RAINY NIGHT; JUNK MAN; TWO WORLDS; BACKWOODS; THEY HEARD IT TWICE; 'TRANE; THROUGH THE CLOUDS.*

**Personnel:** Patitucci, 4- and 6-string basses; Vinnie Colaiuta, drums (cuts 1,3-5,10), Alex Acuna, drums (6), percussion (2,6-8), Terri Lyne Carrington, drums (11), Peter Erskine, drums (12); John Beasley, piano (1,2), synthesizer (2-4,6-8,10); David Witham, piano (3,6), synthesizers (1,8); Michael Brecker, tenor sax (1,8,11); John Scofield, guitar (4,10); Jonathan Crosse, soprano sax (3,6); Paulinho Da Costa, percussion (5); Dori Caymmi, vocals (5); Ricardo Silveira, guitar (5); Judd Miller, EVI (12).

★ ★ ★ ★ 1/2

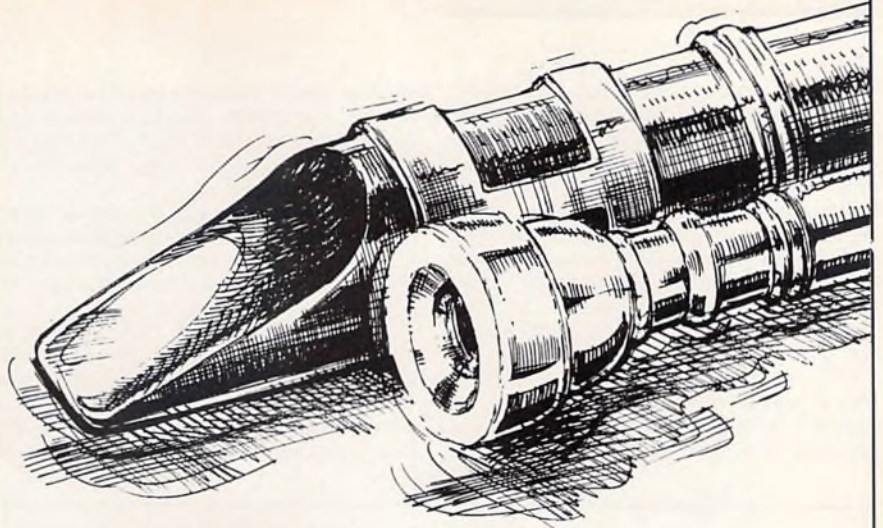
On this, his third album as a leader for GRP, Patitucci has fashioned the best showcase yet for his incredible six-string bass prowess. While 1988's *John Patitucci* and last year's *On The Corner* flaunted his inimitable, mind-boggling legato burn, *Sketchbook* is a more satisfying effort for a few reasons. Compositionally, he takes more chances here, like on the evocative chamber piece, "Two Worlds," with his four overdubbed, bowed basses and Acuna's overdubbed percussion orchestra setting up a moody cushion for Brecker's tenor (recalling the saxophonist's work with Claus Ogerman on

*Gate Of Dreams* and *Cityscape*). And on the haunting ballad "If You Don't Mind," he opens up the form a bit, allowing Jonathan Crosse's soprano to make some dramatic statements, à la Wayne Shorter.

For sheer burn, there's "Scophile," an angular sketch that was written as a tribute to the guitar great. There aren't many bassists who could navigate these changes at such a breakneck tempo, running unison lines with Sco, and then answer the guitarist's killing solo with some fleet-fingered fury of his own. Further evidence of Patitucci's six-string chops can be heard on the burning "Trane," an uptempo cooker that has John running unison on acoustic bass alongside Brecker before turning the tenor great loose after the head. Terri Lyne swings mightily and Patitucci walks furiously while Brecker blows with Coltrane-inspired intensity.

John further showcases his acoustic playing on the moody David Witham ballad "From A Rainy Night" and on the solo piece, "Backwoods," demonstrating that he is equally frightening on both upright and electric. Two commercial nods here are the John Beasley pieces, "Joab" and "Junk Man," both post-Prince, Miles-inspired stabs at pop-funk with improvisation on top. On the other side of the spectrum from such slick productions is the atmospheric improvisation, "Through The Clouds," a chance for John to interact in a live setting with drummer Peter Erskine.

More risk-taking, introspection, searching, variety, and a sense of adventurousness, to go along with the obvious chops-of-doom. (reviewed on cassette) —*Bill Milkowski*



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**Personnel:** Adderley, alto saxophone; Yusef Lateef, flute, oboe, tenor saxophone; Nat Adderley, cornet; Joe Zawinul, piano; Sam Jones, bass; Louis Hayes, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

**CANNONBALL IN JAPAN**—Capitol CDP 7 93560 2: *WORK SONG*; *MERCY, MERCY, MERCY*; *THIS HERE*; *MONEY IN THE POCKET*; *THE STICKS*; *JIVE SAMBA*. (43:22)

**Personnel:** Adderley, alto saxophone; Nat Adderley, cornet; Joe Zawinul, piano; Victor Gaskin, bass; Roy McCurdy, drums.

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feel hip. He played for the people, but he kept his jazz integrity. First hailed as the new Bird, he made the funk tunes boppish and the pop tunes funky. His quintets and sextets built a reputation on bluesy tunes like the six on *Cannonball In Japan*, a reissue never before released in the United States. Recorded live in Tokyo in 1966, it reprises the quintet's greatest hits. There's a certain repetition to the format: infectious rhythms, gospel-tinged chords, soul-charged horns . . . above all, a direct connection to feeling.

Zawinul, composer of "Mercy, Mercy, Mercy" and co-composer of "Money In The Pocket," is instrumental in setting up the grooves—a forerunner of his prowess in

Weather Report. His solos consist of one gospel lick after another—fine for a while, but too limiting over a whole album. Gaskin and McCurdy, like Zawinul, are perfect for the feeling of this music.

The horns get on and off quickly, almost perfunctorily. These are not definitive versions of these tunes, but they're enjoyable for the ebullience and rapport of the brothers and the occasional bursts of brilliance.

*Nippon Soul*, an earlier (1963) live album from Tokyo, reaches deeper into the improvisatory strengths of the band and offers more variety, too. The title track catches Nat in an initially cautious blues approach, Cannonball in a typical strut, and Lateef (on flute) in his

special-effects, thick-toned, mid-Eastern bag. Bass, drums, and piano slug out that funky bottom again.

"Easy To Love" is the strongest bebop statement on the album, a rollicking rollercoaster ride on alto. Lateef's "The Weaver" introduces the composers patented timbre on tenor: the careening bent notes, the foghorn blasts, the split notes. The brothers' "Tengo" is the blues again, made more exotic by a tango rhythm. Ellington's "Come Sunday" shows that Zawinul is a sensitive ballad performer. Nice bass interplay from Jones, too. On Lateef's "Brother John" (Coltrane) we get another dose of the reedman's talents, on oboe, plus Nat's low buzzing and Cannonball's mid-Eastern bluster. "Work Song," a bonus track not on the original issue, features powerful horn solos.

Get this album first for the scope of the Adderleys' popular work and *Cannonball In Japan* for comparison. (reviewed on CD)

—Owen Cordle

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## STEVE VAI

**PASSION AND WARFARE**—Relativity 88561-1037-2: *LIBERTY; EROTIC NIGHTMARES; THE ANIMAL; ANSWERS; THE RIDDLE; BALLERINA; FOR THE LOVE OF GOD; THE AUDIENCE IS LISTENING; I WOULD LOVE TO; BLUE POWDER; GREASY KID'S STUFF; ALIEN WATER KISS; SISTERS; LOVE SECRETS.* (53:00 minutes)

**Personnel:** Vai, guitar, keyboard, various instruments; Stu Hamm, bass (cuts 2-5, 7, 10, 13); Chris Frazier (1-5, 8, 10, 11, 13); Tris Imboden, drums (7, 9); David Rosenthal, keyboards (2, 9, 13); Bob Harris, keyboards (10).

★ ★ ½

Steve Vai is an axeman with an alternately impressive and depressing past. His work with Frank Zappa, when Vai was still a teenager, is legendary—spanning several albums and four years of tours; his work with the heavy metal band Alcatrazz made fans forget Yngwie Malmsteen—the fastest guitarist around—had ever been in the band. Then came the well-moussed Daves. After finding fame with David Lee Roth (Van Halen), Vai met up with David Coverdale, who was hiring guns for his fronted band, Whitesnake. Currently on tour with Whitesnake, *Passion And Warfare* is seen as Vai's chance to escape from bandleader repression.

But he doesn't get far. Yes, the solos are fabulous, from squawk rock to lilting and inspirational. Vai lives only for that moment. The intros and outros to the songs are merely paved with good intentions—clashed formulas and oft-heard riffs. Additionally, Vai, a complex soul,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 40

## THE RAP RACE

by Bill Milkowski

**A**t the time of this writing, M.C. Hammer's *Please Hammer, Don't Hurt 'Em* (Capitol 92857) sits high atop the *Billboard* charts—#1 Pop album and #1 Black album with sales approaching three million. That says a lot about how far rap has come since its days as an underground phenomenon for Bronx streets and house parties.

A lot has happened to the genre since Kurtis Blow's "The Breaks" and Grandmaster Flash's "The Message," two 1980 hits that introduced rap to larger audiences. Digital sampling has revolutionized rap, allowing virtually anyone access to James Brown and George Clinton grooves. And, rappers have elevated their craft to a high art with virtuosic elocution and fluid over-the-bar phrasing that would leave the early rappers tongue-tied and gasping for air, somewhat akin to the leaps Charlie Parker and the beboppers made on the heels of the swing era.

Today, rap is everywhere. Quincy Jones lent some crossover legitimacy to the genre with his *Back On The Block* (see "Reviews" Jan. '90), a kind of *Bitches Brew* of rap music. And now M.C. Hammer is being given his own label by a grateful Capitol Records. It's become big business.

Every major label has its own rap roster these days. Product comes pouring out, relentlessly. A lot of experimentation and risk-taking is pursued by ambitious groups like Public Enemy, with its sophisticated sonic collages, and Def Jef, pushing the envelope with his virtuosic verbal skills. And, the new wave of rappers deal more heavily than ever with social concerns and African roots, like the Jungle Brothers and De La Soul.

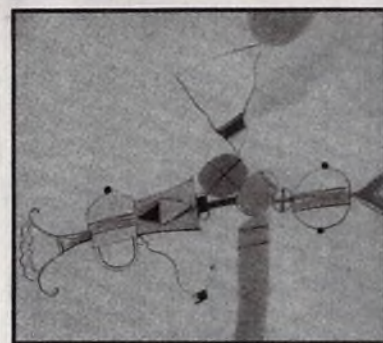
The strongest consciousness-raising stance is taken by a Brooklyn-based group called **X-Clan** on their X-cellent debut, *To The East Blackwards* (4th & B'Way 444019-4; 44:29 minutes: ★★★★★). Combining P-Funk, Zapp, and Roy Ayers samples with slick scratching and an uncompromising Afrocentric viewpoint, they offer food for thought with a backbeat. Their motto: "Descended from the tribes of Africa, inspired by the great black leaders," of which they include Marcus Garvey, Malcolm X, Adam Clayton Powell, Martin Luther King, and Brooklyn activist Sonny Carson. They come off like a thinking man's Public Enemy. Brother J is an astoundingly agile rapper (or, as he prefers to be called, "Grand Verbalizer"). "Raise The Flag" is a funky call for knowledge and unity against a mellow Roy Ayers tune while the exuberant "Funkin' Lesson" is underscored by P-Funk's anthemic "One Nation Under A Groove." Scratch-wiz Sugar Shaft breaks loose on "Shaft's Big Score" while the group gets metaphysical on "Earthbound," a messengers-of-Ra rap with George Clinton's catchy "Atomic Dog" sample. Their mission

is to educate, using hip-hop as the medium. And it's funky, too.

On the consciousness-lowering front is **2 Live Crew** with their raunchy, juvenile onslaught of X-rated rapping on *As Nasty As They Wanna Be* (Skywalker Records 107: ★). This album, recently declared obscene by the U.S. District Court in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, is a sloppy, low-budget production that harkens back to the primitive days of rap, when Bronx rappers were obsessed with bragging about their skills on the mic and in bed. It's basically the hip-hop version of Andrew Dice Clay (and even includes a "Dirty Nursery Rhymes" segment). While I don't consider it evil, dangerous, or obscene, it holds no interest musically or lyrically, though I'm sure, that call-and-response raps like "If You Believe In Having Sex" go over bigtime at frat parties. The basic formula of the album is stated in no uncertain terms on "Break It On Down," in which they describe their music as "An underground sound talkin' shit off the street/That ghetto style with a hard-ass beat." This music definitely speaks to somebody, but not me.

Two compilations might better acquaint the uninitiated to what's happening in rap music today. Artista's rap sampler, *Bust This Again* (Arista 2007: ★★★★★), is a non-threatening, squeaky-clean, lightweight collection that features the silly raps of **Serious-Lee-Fine**, who takes his musical cues from '60s hits like "Everybody Plays The Fool" and "The Game Of Love" by Wayne Fontana & the Mindbenders. On "Weak At The Knees" by the Philly-based **Three Times Dope**, rapper E.S.T. gets into a bragging bag about his effect on women. Old hat. And **Icoy Jaye**, a precocious 17-year-old from Gainesville, Florida, comes off like rap's answer to Debbie Gibson on the gossipy "It's Just A Girl Thing." Most interesting acts on this compilation are **Urban Dance Squad**, a Rotterdam-based group whose gimmick is to use a real, flesh-and-blood rhythm section and '60s-styled psychedelia behind its raps, and **Snop**, the UK's answer to Public Enemy with rapper Turbo B's powerful voice booming on top of an edgy techno-industrial-noise disco groove. Warner Bros. has a stronger compilation in *We're All In The Same Gang* (Warner Bros. 9 26241-2; 52:59: ★★½). The title track is a virtual *We Are The World* of rap, featuring a host of West Coast All-Stars including **M.C. Hammer**, **Ico-T**, **Young M.C.**, **Def Jef**, **Digital Underground**, and **Tone Loc**. Each rapper takes the mic and grabs a piece of the James Brown "Cold Sweat" groove while calling for an end to the gang violence that has plagued the Los Angeles and Oakland areas in recent years. A great beat with some eloquent pleas from some of the best wordsmiths in the business. The rest of the album includes promising new rap talent like **M.C. Supreme** and the **South Central posse**. But the title track is the killer. Save some money and buy the 12-inch single. (reviewed on CD; all others on cassette) **DB**

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- Art Lange/February 1990



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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 38

is a bit overwhelming with his themes of destiny and victory. While we can all use some hope in our lives, Vai's works (especially "Liberty" and "For The Love Of God") are more suited to the soundtrack to *Top Gun* than for listening pleasure. In "The Riddle," for example, the words to "The Pledge of Allegiance" are recited over the emotional, "America-yes!" feeling of the guitars. "I Would Love To" is especially tried and true—happy guitar with a riff heard in several Top-40 songs; if this album finds radio airplay, this one will be the pick.

While *Passion And Warfare* is destined to enthrall some avid Vai (and bassist Stu Hamm) fans, it leaves little room to jam beneath its layers of themes, spoken words, and monotonous phrasing. (reviewed on CD)

—Brenda Herrmann

Jimmy Reed and fellow Louisianan Slim Harpo. This is a re-release of a poorly-distributed King Snake LP from a few years back; Alligator obviously hopes to expose Neal to a wider audience.

Neal succeeds best when acknowledging his roots. "Blues On The Moon" is a revved-up variation on Slim Harpo's "Scratch My Back" lode, augmented by a modern, string-bending solo from Rafal's son, guitarist Kenny Neal; on "Late In The Evening," Neal's harmonica affects Harpo's reedy warble as the horns punch things along with a carnival-like, almost zydeco bounce.

Notable throughout is Kenny. On "Been So Long," a rather standard Little Walter-style harp outing, his leadwork pushes the beat along with propulsive note clusters, linked together by longer phrases extending like strings between them. "Luberta," a minor-key bayou murder mystery diluted a bit by riffing horns, features a guitar solo that's meticulously crafted yet burns with an underlying fire throughout, all the more incendiary for being understated.

Otherwise, things get somewhat monotonous over the long haul. "You Don't Love Me" is a standard blues, entertaining enough but hardly the stuff of legend; the updating of Jimmy Reed's "Honest I Do" robs the classic of its sparse emotionality and adds little of contemporary value; the old Canned Heat warhorse "Let's Work Together" is inexplicably turned into a show tune, sounding too much like showbiz "Summer of Love" nostalgia for my ears.

Neal's tasteful blowing and passionate voice are the tools of a master bluesman; he'll have to find stronger material or develop more creativity in his interpretations of standards if he's to record the masterpiece he's got in him. (reviewed on CD)

—David Whiteis



## RAFAL NEAL

**LOUISIANA LEGEND**—Alligator 4783; *LUBERTA*; *STEAL AWAY*; *BLUES ON THE MOON*; *DOWN AND OUT*; *YOU DON'T LOVE ME*; *NO CUTTIN' LOOSE*; *BEEN SO LONG*; *LATE IN THE EVENING*; *HONEST I DO*; *LET'S WORK TOGETHER*. (33:50 minutes)

**Personnel:** Neal, vocals and harmonica; Kenny Neal, lead guitar; Bryan Bassett, Ernie Lancaster, rhythm guitar; Barry Rupp, Red Simpson, keyboards; Bob Greenlee, baritone sax, bass; Jim Payne, Denny Best, Scott Corwin, drums; the King Snake Horns; Bruce Staelens, trumpet; Noble "Thin Man" Watts, tenor sax; John Paltishall, trombone.

★ ★ ★

Veteran blues harpist Rafal Neal is known for his Little Walter-based tonal attack and a sparse soulfulness that shows his debt to both

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## PAULINE OLIVEROS/ STUART DEMPSTER/ PANAIOTIS

**DEEP LISTENING**—New Albion NA 022 CD:  
*LEAR; SUIREN; IONE; NIKE.* (63:17 minutes)

**Personnel:** Oliveros, accordion, voice, conch shell; Dempster, trombone, didjeridu, garden hose, voice, conch shell; Panaiotis (Peter Ward), voice, percussion.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

## PAULINE OLIVEROS

**THE ROOTS OF THE MOMENT**—hat ART CD  
6009: *THE ROOTS OF THE MOMENT.* (58:17)

**Personnel:** Oliveros, accordion, digital delay

processors; Ward, digital effects processors.

★ ★ ★ ★

Pauline Oliveros' music must be about subtlety and texture. Why else would three musicians and an engineer clamber 14 feet underground into an abandoned cistern to play modal improvisations for accordion (in just intonation), trombone, voice, and whatever bits of metal happened to be available? The amazingly clean, 45-second reverb in the cistern has a lot to do with it.

*Deep Listening*, the product of this subterranean experiment, deals with acoustics, harmonics, and the persistence (and decay) of sound. It is not eventful music, in the sense that melodies or rhythms develop predictably, but it flows and varies. It is "minimal" music in the John Cage sense of the word. Not very much happens on a superficial level, and this is by design.

In the cistern, it is nearly impossible to distinguish the reverberated sound from the original tone. The extended reverb allows trombonist Stuart Dempster to create vocal tones and drones that seem to sustain themselves infinitely. Oliveros' accordion harmonizes with trombone and voice. Taking the reverb into account, the result is a seamless wash of sound, creating the aural illusion of many more than three musicians.

I don't want to imply that this music is abstract in a purely academic sense. The vocal

and horn harmonies create feeling, alongside abstraction, and the listener gets a sense of something stately and vast, if a little bit mournful. This music has as much grace and Olympian detachment as can be acquired in a deep hole in the ground.

Oliveros' *The Roots Of The Moment* is an earlier project with similar goals, matching the composer's "expanded accordion" (with delay processors) to a series of sound environments created by Peter Ward using digital-effects processing. The process is not far removed from the "Frippteronic" tape-loop delay system utilized by Robert Fripp and Brian Eno. The settings created for Oliveros' improvisations range from rhythmic patterns, reminiscent of ragas, calliopes, and Terry Riley, to abstractions which can be introspective to the point of inscrutability. The effect here is more concentrated than on *Deep Listening*, largely because there are no other voices to balance the slightly detuned, edgy sound of the just-intonation accordion.

Listening to the releases side by side, you hear the cistern as an acoustic delay processor (or the delay processor as a digital cistern). Think of it as Frippteronic for the squeeze box. Where *Deep Listening* can be enjoyed through various levels of attention, including subliminal and catatonic, *Roots* is busier and more intricate. It challenges, rather than soothes, demanding attention for its hour's length. (reviewed on CD) —Jon Andrews

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**SPYRO GYRA  
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**FAST FORWARD**—GRP GRD-9608: BRIGHT LIGHTS; PARA TI LATINO; ALEXANDRA; OCEAN PARKWAY; SPEAK EASY; FUTUREPHOBIA; 4MD; SHADOW PLAY; ESCAPE HATCH; TOWER OF BABEL. (48:46)

**Personnel:** Beckenstein, saxes; Tom Schuman, keyboards; Dave Samuels, vibes, marimba, synths; Richie Morales, drums; Oscar Cartaya, bass; Jay Azzolina, guitar; Marc Quinones, percussion; Jeff Beal, Barry Danelian, trumpet; Randy Andos, trombone; Scott Kreitzer, tenor sax; David Broza, vocal (cut 10).

★ ★ ★

Interesting that on this first album with Spyro Gyra's new official name—Spyro Gyra Featuring Jay Beckenstein—the approach seems more democratic, the playing stronger than ever, and the results positive for SG fans.

With its formulaic approach to jazz fusion music (which has worked just fine in the marketplace, thank you), Spyro has been an easy target for critics. There have always been talented players in the band—even moreso perhaps in recent years as Beckenstein hired the ferocious Morales on drums, first Badrena on percussion and now the newcomer Marc Quinones. But they've also often seemed stifled by their arrangements. Along on this trip is bassist Oscar Cartaya, who supplies ample funk, Latin, and rock bottom along with the song that kick-starts *Fast Forward*, "Para Ti Latino." We're talking the real thing here, folks, with 'Beck' bringing in the "No Sweat Horns" for some tight and blazing salsa blowing.

The middle of the disc gets into serious funk. Schuman's "Futurephobia" uses the current music technology so well that it pokes fun at its own name. "4MD" is a fine, well-played Miles-ish thing written by former bandmember Jeremy Wall, and features Morales at his slap-happiest, and a new voice who makes good use of his space, trumpeter Jeff Beal. Another Schuman composition, "Escape Hatch," gives bandmembers a chance to swing through a dipping, bobbing head. The group is a little tougher to get a grasp on, snaking through more types of terrain, à la Yellowjackets' last

few releases.

The leader's ballad, "Shadow Play," is his best feature, as the saxman shows not only what he can play but how to use space as well. He and Schuman bare their teeth on "Tower Of Babel," breaking some hell loose. Their first album created a stir in the fusion world—there have been 14 records since then. *Fast Forward* proves that they can still mount a solid attack when they want to. This is a more mature Spyro Gyra, kinder perhaps, but thankfully not gentler. (reviewed on CD)

—Robin Tolleson



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## THE PRETENDERS

**PACKED!**—Sire 9 26219-2: *NEVER DO THAT; LET'S MAKE A PACT; MILLIONAIRES; MAY THIS BE LOVE; NO GUARANTEE; WHEN WILL I SEE YOU; SENSE OF PURPOSE; DOWNTOWN (AKRON); HOW DO I MISS YOU; HOLD A CANDLE TO THIS; CRIMINAL.* (38:49 minutes)

**Personnel:** Chrissie Hynde, lead vocals, guitar (cuts 1-3,5-11); Billy Bremner, guitar (1-9,11), backing vocals (1,8); David Rhodes (3,11), Tchad Blake, guitar (4,5); Blair Cunningham, drums, backing vocals (1,8); Will MacGregor, bass (1), backing vocals (1); John MacKenzie (2,3,5,6,8), Duane Verh, bass (4); Dominic Miller, guitar (7,8), bass (7), vocals (7); Tony Gad, bass, vocals (9); Mitchell Froom, keyboards (2,4-6,9,11); Teo Miller (3), Adey Wilson (3), Tim Finn (6), Mark Hart, vocals (6).

★ ★ ★ ½

It's been four years since Chrissie Hynde and her ever-changing group's last studio album. She was in no rush to push out new material, saying, "If I don't have something to say there's no point in being out there." Don't expect a radical departure musically from past Pretenders albums. There are hard-driving rockers, sweet-with-an-edge slow tunes, and a reggae-influenced song. As on earlier efforts, Hynde aggressively growls out the angry numbers and exhibits a vocal toughness in the love songs. She's still singing with an almost detached coolness yet brimming her tunes with raw emotion. It's hard to tell why the first number, "Never Do That," starts off with watery, jangly guitar riffs that are so reminiscent of the band's big hit "Back On The Chain Gang." Is Hynde letting her listeners know that she's back from her hiatus as strong as ever by making reference to the song? Or, is this simply a case of recycling past success?

To what degree *Packed!* is a retooling of older material is open to debate. But the bottom line is that Hynde's return is welcomed. She is one of the premier woman singer/songwriters in the rock world, which she assertively reaffirms with this album. She rips through several blasting-cap numbers, including "No Guarantee" (a barrage of killer guitar licks is unleashed), "Millionaires" (Hynde cops a punk attitude in slamming the rich and slashing their car tires), and "Downtown (Akron)" (a fast, grinding ride through the boarded-up, run-down, and violent section of

her home town). In addition, Hynde sings potent slow numbers. "Criminal" is a song with a poignant and painfully-drawn connection between drug addiction and relationship dependency. On "When Will I See You," the tune about summertime longing where Hynde's vocals are most delicately expressed, she gets demonstrative in the bridge, "Demand the impossible! Everyone will be free/We'll walk down the Avenue openly—openly!" And on the collection's highlight piece, "May This Be Love," Hynde takes on the Jimi Hendrix song and makes it her own with somber, innocence-lost vocals and richly colored guitar textures.

On "Sense Of Purpose," Hynde snarls, "Bully boys don't bother me/I purse my lips and they run away." Her new songs don't break any new ground, but they've got that lip-pursing punch to them that makes this collection an impressive one. (reviewed on CD). —Dan Ouellette



## GRAWE/REIJSEGER/HEMINGWAY

**SONIC FICTION**—hot ART CD 6043: *ALIEN CORN I-III; FIBULATION; ASPECTS OF SOMNAMBULISM/DEMURE SCUTTLE; ASPECTS OF SOMNAMBULISM/SLEEPWALTZER; FANGLED TALK; MASTING.* (68:50 minutes)

**Personnel:** George Grawe, piano; Ernst Reijseger, cello; Gerry Hemingway, percussion.

★ ★ ★ ★

## STEVE COHN

**ITTEKIMASU**—White Cow WRC 1203: *ITTEKIMASU, MOVEMENTS 1-5.* (55:15)

**Personnel:** Cohn, piano, shakuhachi, hichiriki, shofar, khaen, percussion; Fred Hopkins, bass; Thurman Barker, drums, marimba, percussion.

★ ★ ★ ★

Piano trios aren't what they used to be. For openers, the pianist may not be at the keyboard exclusively, as is the case with Steve Cohn, who also plays a variety of indigenous instruments. *Ittekimasu* and *Sonic Fiction* update the evolution of piano trios from showcases of prestidigitation to an open-ended forum for adventurous ensemble statements, each offering intriguing aspects of an emerging post-Taylor landscape.

The German pianist George Grawe is one of a growing number of musicians who have emerged from European free jazz to embrace strong compositional values. This co-op trio with virtuosic Dutch cellist Ernst Reijseger and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 46

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## RETURN OF THE KILLER TOMATOES

by Gene Santoro

**T**he return of the killer Tomato label is welcome indeed. Twenty years ago, founder Kevin Eggers, graphic artist Milton Glaser, and a host of knowledgeable annotators like Robert Palmer concluded to make the small label a treasure trove. Known for its blues recordings, Tomato also broke ground with classical discs like Philip Glass' then-revolutionary *Einstein On The Beach*, jazz outings like Sam Rivers' *Waves*, and country-flavored folk like Townes Van Zandt's *The Nashville Sessions*.

Now the treasure—buried when Tomato folded in the midst of the industry's collapse in the early 1980s—has come back to daylight on CD. This month's roundup focuses on the catalog's bluesy backbone; next, we'll go through its various limbs.

**Roosevelt Sykes's** 1977 *Music Is My Business* (2696642; 45:54 minutes: ★★★½), with Johnny Shines on guitar and vocals, Louisiana Red on guitar and vocals, and Sugar Blue on harp, is the real deal; it almost smells of ribs and booze. The occasional bum note just reinforces the down-home atmosphere that lurks in tracks like the laidback but intense "A Good Woman," where Blue's fluidly idiomatic harp hovers over a keening bottleneck. And at the center, of course, is the dapper Honeydripper's effortlessly roiling ivory-tickling and smoothly throaty voice.

**Johnny Shines** was one of Robert Johnson's running buddies, and learned many of his moves from that seminal blues great. Shines' 1975 *Too Wet To Plow* (2696362; 48:26: ★★★½), with Louisiana Red on guitar and vocal, Sugar Blue on harp, and Ron Rault on bass, features the quavery, pierced-to-the-soul singing that so eerily echoes Johnson's and the deftly crying bottleneck that haunts his words like a hellhound. (It also boasts a cover of Johnson's uncharacteristically ragtimey "They're Red Hot," here called "Hot Tomale.") Shines opens a heartfelt window on the history of the Delta blues: each of his tunes recycles, as was common practice, the standard lyrics and riffs of the region, while his performances infuse them with the appropriate fervor or irony.

Harp wielder **Peg Leg Sam** was a classic country bluesman, and his body bore the marks of the life he led: the knife scar slicing across his right cheek and ear, the missing limb that gave him his name, the unpainted shack he called home, the emphysema. *Joshua* (2696652; 41:09: ★★★½), which features Louisiana Red and traditional tunes like "Joshua Fit The Battle Of Jericho," "John Henry," "Mr. Ditty Wa Ditty," and "Poor Boy," is an easygoing but unsentimental reminder of a time, place, and way of life now almost gone.

**Mississippi Fred McDowell's** 1971 *Shake 'Em On Down* (2696372; 44:01: ★★★★★) was cut at the old Gaslight in the Village (with Tom Pomposello on bass, second guitar on the title track), and so is a snapshot of a living performer. One of the most incisive slide guitarists to come out of the Delta, McDowell, like many of his blues peers, had long since switched to an electric ax. (The '60s

folkie purists were horrified and forced many of them to switch back—temporarily.) Here we get a typical set, scrawled by McDowell's parched voice, that includes "John Henry" and "You Got To Move" (covered by his fans, the Rolling Stones). Ominous and funny and virtuosic, *Shake 'Em On Down* shimmers with mood and tempo shifts as graceful and inevitable as a river rolling to the sea.

**Louisiana Red's** 1975 *Midnight Rambler* (2696342; 74:01: ★★½) is very much within the Robert Johnson Delta-blues tradition that culminated in Muddy Waters, Robert Jr. Lockwood, and Johnny Shines. The notes say Red made his living for a while as a Muddy imitator, and you can hear why. Most of the indifferent material was written by producer Kent Cooper.

**John Lee Hooker's** two-CD *Alone* (2696602; 82:54: ★★★★★) is just what it says: Hooker and an electric guitar. That means Hooker at his most menacing, unconstrained by bar lines and accompanists, free to relentlessly follow the mood of the tune wherever it suits him. It's also live, at New York City's Hunter College, so like McDowell's album it gives you a genuine feel for the man at work. Hooker's dark and resonant voice either plays call-and-response with his spasmodic guitar or else chants over its boogie drone to mesmerizing, spintangling effect. With all his influential hits—"I Miss You So" (covered by the Animals as "Maudie"), "Boom Boom" (also covered by the Animals), "One Bourbon, One Scotch, One Beer" (covered by George Thorogood), "Jesse James," "Boogie Chillun," "Crawlin' Kingsnake"—it's a must-have, despite the sometimes out-of-tune guitar. The characteristically informative historical notes by Robert Palmer are great icing on the cake.

**Albert King's** reissued *New Orleans Heat* (2696332; 41:39: ★★★★★) should be an adventure where King's deep, rich voice and mewling, scraggly guitar meet the deep Southern soul of Louisiana's Sea Saint house band—which happens to include half of the Meters and Allen Toussaint. And so it is, though less daring than it could have been. There are, as usual with Albert King albums, weak spots: the blatant ripoff of B.B.'s "The Thrill Is Gone" called "The Feeling," the downright silly version of "The Very Thought Of You," the too-often weak material. But offsetting all that is plenty of the patented super-slinky stretch that makes Albert King's vocalic guitar unlike any other.

King was caught at the 1977 Montreux Jazz Festival on *Live* (2696262; 71:34: ★★★★★½). Both Louisiana Red and Rory Gallagher, who stopped by to jam, got smoked into backing the outsized blues great. His rhythm-section-plus-horns kicks with the power the best bluesmen pack in front of a crowd, while over it all, on tunes like "Watermelon Man," "Stormy Monday," and "Kansas City" the master's tortured bent notes arch and twist. *Live* documents how King can turn one note into an unparalleled lecture on heartache.

**Robert Cray** has abandoned the blues for pop that intermittently hints at its roots, but his solid 1980 debut, *Too Many Cooks* (2696532; 35:48: ★★½), is a reminder that he seemed on his way to joining the blues revitalizers. Although he didn't (and doesn't) ever really let loose, Cray's guitar could talk some trash in the Albert Collins vein, and his song choices and charts are almost always smart. **DB**

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## SONIC FICTION

Together, their music is easier characterized than described, since the wealth of colors, moods, textures, and melodies is fluid enough to shift not only from piece to piece, but moment to moment. There is, for me, a European aesthetic at work here, a blend of modern and historic sources with the added bittersweet spice of folk elements from the soil. It's a delicate, demanding juggling act, drawing on past experiences while remaining alert and honest to the immediacy of this particular moment. Their intuitive tactics are frequently breathtaking, as they simultaneously shadow each other's moves, suggest spontaneous new directions, and exist as an individual; Reijseger etching deft melodic contours out of the merest effects at times, Hemingway exhorting and embellishing, Gräwe—with a crisp clarity of articulation, complete rhythmic flexibility, and an ear for piano sonorities, plus a resolute insistence on building block foundations—instilling structural support and lyrical alterations.

There's irony in the title, *Sonic Fiction*; because music this immediate, this intuitive yet integrated is not a science, and fictive to the point of being invented by the imagination, but not feigned. The intricacy of movement, design, and detail they create is a joy and a pleasure. That's a fact.

— Art Lange  
November 1989

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 44

the ever-resourceful percussion of Gerry Hemingway is an expansive, fluid counterpart to the incisive, multistylistic structures of his GrubenKlang Orchestra (most recently documented on *Songs And Variations*, hat ART CD 6028). There is a wry, almost deadpan ambience in this trio's interplay, as they continuously put themselves out on tenuous limbs to create engaging music. Grawe sparingly employs the type of blinding speed, percussive forcefulness, and sonic density associated with Taylor; when he does, as on "Sleepwaltzer," he is agile rather than thunderous. More often, he deliberately develops discernable structures that bring his deft articulation and sensitivity of the instrument's capabilities to the fore. (reviewed on CD)

At the core of Steve Cohn's sensibility is a literate slant on the American avant garde of the '60s, as his linear tendencies extend Paul Bley's metabop, while his cogent use of ethnic instruments goes well beyond stock poses of texture and transcendentalism. *Ittekimasu* is a suite of improvisations that taps both the breadth and the depth of his musicianship; Cohn's intricate counterpoint and drama-infused minor harmonies are equally effective on muscular jazz-hued sprints and pointillistic passages. Not only can Cohn run with the likes of Fred Hopkins and Thurman Barker, who are both sterling throughout this varied program, but he brings out infrequently heard aspects of their work, particularly Barker's fluent marimba. There are few American pianists who have Cohn's talents, and who have relentlessly pursued a largely self-produced career, without a wider audience taking notice; a condition *Ittekimasu* should begin to change. (reviewed on LP) —*Bill Shoemaker*



## PAUL JACKSON, JR.

**OUT OF THE SHADOWS**—Atlantic 7 82065-2: *MAKE IT LAST FOREVER; ALL FOR YOU; DAYS GONE BY; ENCINO SHUFFLE; THE WAY IT HAS TO BE; THIS LOVE'S ON ME; THE NEW JAZZ SWING; ROAD TO EVERLASTING; MY THANG; I WANT JESUS TO WALK WITH ME; MAKE IT LAST FOREVER (REPRISE); ENCINO SHUFFLE (REPRISE)*. (61:24 minutes)

**Personnel:** Jackson, guitars, drums, bass, synthesizer; Cornelius Mims, keyboards, bass, drums, synthesizer programming; Rex Salas (cut 1), Robbie Buchanan (3), Bobby Lyle (4, 7), Jon Gilutin (6), George Duke (6), Patrice Rushen (8), Timoteo (7, 9), Jerry Peters (10), Wayne Linsey (8, 10), keyboards; George Howard, soprano sax (2); Kirk Whalum, tenor sax (4);

Gerald Albright, alto sax (9); Ollie Brown (6), John Robinson (8), Harvey Mason (10), drums; Paulinho Da Costa (2, 10), James Reese (4, 5), percussion; Bart Collier (4), Nathan East (10), bass; Tim Owens, Luther Vandross, Cori Carwell, Lynn Davis, Alex Brown, Blanche Jackson, Monty Seward, Porsche Griffen, Cornelius Mims, Terry Steele, Angel Rogers, vocals.

★ ★ ★ ½

## RICKY PETERSON

**NIGHT WATCH**—Warner Bros. 9 26142-2: *ONE NEVER KNOWS; NIGHT WATCH; LUVIN' IT UP; HIGH RISE DRIFTER; LOOK WHO'S LONELY NOW; TAKE A CHANCE; PUT YOUR FAITH IN ME; THE CRAZED WEASEL; TAKE MY HEART AWAY*. (40:09)

**Personnel:** Peterson, keyboards, vocals; Vinnie Colaiuta, Gordy Knudtson (4), drums; John Patitucci, Shaun LaBelle (4), bass; Paul Peterson (1), Jimmy Behringer (1, 3, 5), Oliver Lieber (4), Levi Seacer (6, 8), Robben Ford (7), guitars; Brandon Fields (3), Bob Malach (4, 5, 7, 8), Kenny Garrett (6), saxophones.

★ ★ ★

Ricky Peterson is a Minneapolis session whiz, but more importantly to **DB** readers is the fact that the keyboardist has great sounds and ideas. His trumpet mute-tation on the title track is not only real, but played *in* the style. Following it up with an acoustic solo, he dances nimbly on the keys, using the whole palate before him; and believe me, MIDI been very good to Peterson.

The rhythm section of Colaiuta and Patitucci is something of a dream, and they don't disappoint. On the commercial tunes they keep it in the pocket. The bassist remembers the low end. Somehow the snare drum doesn't sound real on "Night Watch," and they insist on doubling existing snares with electronic hand claps that are a bit demeaning to the music on an otherwise nice piece of work. "High Rise Drifter." The best of Peterson's vocal tunes is the gospelish "Put Your Faith In Me." The others are a slightly whiter Steely Dan (the David Foster syndrome), and all seem to be the same tempo. I wish they'd have tried to pry more funky instrumentals out of Peterson instead of a couple of the vocal numbers. They do some nice jamming on "The Crazy Weasel," with saxman Bob Malach and guitarist Levi Seacer taking nice turns around the tune before the leader finishes off the fast break with a powerful sounding thunk.

Paul Jackson, Jr.'s *Out Of The Shadows* is another record full of warm sounds, both from Jackson's acoustic and electric guitars, crisp and full drums, and the dozens of female vocalists who adorn the album. Beware if drum machines are not for you, or if you're looking for a lot of interplay from the rhythm section. Jackson likes to program, and he also likes to play drums and all the other instruments by himself. It's definitely a studio album. He finds ways to work in the ladies' cooing, but unfortunately it also seems like he has to find places to work his *guitar* in.

Jackson can really play. He picks his spots on the first three tunes, then jumps into it seriously on "Encino Shuffle," with saxman Kirk Whalum. "The Way It Has To Be" is reminiscent

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4. **Hall of Fame:** Vote for the artist—living or dead—who in your opinion has made the greatest contribution to contemporary music. The following previous winners are not eligible: Cannonball Adderley, Louis Armstrong, Albert Ayler, Chet Baker, Count Basie, Sidney Bechet, Bix Beiderbecke, Art Blakey, Clifford Brown, Benny Carter, Charlie Christian, Kenny Clarke, Ornette Coleman, John Coltrane, Miles Davis, Paul Desmond, Johnny Dodds, Eric Dolphy, Roy Eldridge, Duke Ellington, Bill Evans, Gil Evans, Ella Fitzgerald, Stan Getz, Dizzy Gillespie, Benny Goodman, Dexter Gordon, Stephane Grappelli, Lionel Hampton, Coleman Hawkins, Fletcher Henderson, Jimi Hendrix, Woody Herman, Earl Hines, Johnny Hodges, Billie Holiday, Thad Jones, Stan Kenton, Rahsaan Roland Kirk, Gene Krupa, Glenn Miller, Charles Mingus, Thelonious Monk, Wes Montgomery, Jelly Roll Morton, Fats Navarro, King Oliver, Charlie Parker, Jaco Pastorius, Art Pepper, Oscar Peterson, Bud Powell, Django Reinhardt, Buddy Rich, Max Roach, Sonny Rollins, Pee Wee Russell, Woody Shaw, Zoot Sims, Bessie Smith, Billy Strayhorn, Sun Ra, Art Tatum, Cecil Taylor, Jack Teagarden, Lennie Tristano, Sarah Vaughan, Joe Venuti, Fats Waller, Ben Webster, Mary Lou Williams, Teddy Wilson, and Lester Young.

5. **Miscellaneous Instruments:** Instruments not having their own category, with these exceptions: valve trombone, included in trombone category; cornet and flugelhorn, included in the trumpet category.

6. **Jazz, Pop/Rock, Blues/Soul/R&B, Rap, and World Beat recordings of the Year:** Select only LPs/CDs issued during the last 12 months. (Sept 1, '89-Aug. 31, '90) Do not vote for 45s or EPs. Include full title and artist's name. If your choice is part of a series, indicate volume number.

7. Only one selection counted in each category.

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of a funky Tower Of Power bari sax and bass groove, and Jackson's ringing octaves give it some George Benson classiness underneath. "My Thang" is a hip-hop jumble of samples, vocoder, wah-wah, metal guitar, and P-Funk party phrases. In the midst of it, Jackson is putting out some fine phrases of his own. The funky rhythm & blues track "I Want Jesus To Walk With Me" gives the young Jackson more than four bars for a solo and has a complete rhythm section playing together for once. Jackson never bores you with his soloing on *Out Of The Shadows*. He's fused what he's learned about jazz with the sounds of soul, r&b, rock, and the streets. This isn't true-blue jazz but there are lots of things about Paul Jackson, Jr. to like. (reviewed on CD) —Robin Tolleson



## MIKE CLARK

**GIVE THE DRUMMER SOME**—Slash ST-CD-22: JOY SPRING; IS THERE A JACKSON IN THE HOUSE?; FEEL NO EVIL; BAGHDAD BY THE BAY; GIVE THE DRUMMER SOME; WALTZ FOR ME; MUTANTS OF METALUMA; DR. J; IF YOU COULD SEE ME NOW; NIGHT IN TUNISIA. (67:37 minutes)

**Personnel:** Clark, drums; Ricky Ford, tenor saxophone; Jack Walrath, trumpet; Jack Wilkins, guitar; Neal Kirkwood, piano; Chip Jackson, bass.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

After growing up on Mike Clark's drumming with Herbie Hancock's Headhunters, I'd followed him into the progressive rock throne of Britain's Brand X, but after that lost track of his playing. Judging from *Give The Drummer Some*, he's been playing quite a bit, and focusing more than ever on mainstream jazz. He plays the lights out of the album-opening "Joy Spring," stroking and hammering a solo midway through that is quite a calling card. His two-and-a-half-minute drum solo, the album's title track, is an interesting musical piece and pretty darn amazing from a technical standpoint. And he plays brushes (that's right, kids) on the beautiful Tadd Dameron ballad "If You Could See Me Now."

Peter Erskine's first solo album was very good, but I don't know if it was this good. There's a hint of funk here and there, but only a hint, as Clark melds Latin and swing on Walrath's "Feel No Evil." He mixes it up underneath a muted but never completely safe-sounding Wilkins guitar excursion. Chip Jackson is an instigator and a very good listener on bass. Ricky Ford takes it to previously unknown ground, propelling the tune higher. They funkify "Night In Tunisia" a bit, as Clark opens with a

scorching exercise and settles into a greasy pattern that must kill 'em at clinics. Soon the funk is forgotten however, as Walrath blazes a line and the drummer is making a jazzy jet stream on his ride cymbal. The interplay and outerplay on this tune closes the album in style.

All the players have long affiliations with Clark—Walrath for 20 years, Ford 10. Everyone contributes material, and it's played precisely but loosely enough to allow some swing

and improvisation. Walrath's compositions are certainly pleasing to the ear, while retaining something of an ominous tone. Wilkins' "Dr. J" gives Clark a chance to syncopate in the funk vein, and the guitarist gets plum nasty in a rhythmic skirmish under the hoop late in the game. I would love to hear this sextet in-person sometime, somewhere. *Give The Drummer Some* is a well-rounded first effort from an unsung drum hero. (reviewed on CD)

—Robin Tolleson

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## KENNY BURRELL/ DONALD BYRD

**ALL NIGHT LONG**—Prestige OJCCD-427-2:  
*ALL NIGHT LONG; BOO-LU; FLICKERS; LI'L HANKIE;  
BODY & SOUL; TUNE UP.* (54:38 minutes)

**Personnel:** Byrd, trumpet; Burrell, guitar; Hank Mobley, tenor sax; Jerome Richardson, flute, tenor sax; Mal Waldron, piano; Doug Watkins, bass; Arthur Taylor, drums.

★ ★ ½

## KENNY BURRELL

**GUIDING SPIRIT**—Contemporary C-14058:  
*CALLING YOU; MAIN STEM; IN A SENTIMENTAL MOOD;  
MOMENT'S NOTICE; GUIDING SPIRIT; SOUL EYES;  
MIDNIGHT BLUE; IN WALKED BUD.*

**Personnel:** Burrell, guitar; Jay Hoggard, vibes; Marcus McLaurine, bass; Yoron Israel, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

"Funky" was the catchword to describe the modern jazzman's true blues in the '50s. The title track of the Byrd-Burrell '56 reissue exemplifies the feeling. A blues with a bridge, it begins and ends with the guitarist's sanctified lead, sandwiching solos all around: cool, jittery Richardson on flute, languid and boppish Mobley, crisp Byrd, preacher-like Richardson on tenor, spare and vinegary Waldron. Waldron's "Flickers" and Mobley's "Boo-Lu" and "Li'l

Hankie"—three minor-key tunes—follow in fashion. Burrell experiences occasional problems along the way, appearing out of phase with the rhythm section.

From the perspective of the '90s, Mobley's tone seems too limp. Waldron is the most consistently rewarding soloist, with motific, Monk-like turns. But everyone fares better on "Body & Soul" and "Tune Up," two tracks not on the original album. Here, Byrd especially shows his assets: nice tone, Clifford Brown-like running lines, decisive direction. But overall, the album has a dated quality. It was adequate for its day; in retrospect, Burrell and company and jazz have moved on. (reviewed on CD)

The improvement is noted in *Guiding Spirit*, a live '89 Village Vanguard date, where the guitarist's time flows smoothly, his harmonic resources are broader, and the group is more unified. The session is low-key. Intimacy rules. This is controlled, concise playing.

The blues connection surfaces directly in Duke Ellington's "Main Stem" and Burrell's

## SUMMERTIME BLUES

by John Ephland

"A pop opera about coming-of-age," the **Beach Boys' *Pet Sounds*** (Capitol CDP 7 48421 2; 43:00 minutes: ★★★★★) was actually by and about Brian Wilson, with help from friends, relatives, and studio mates. As music critic John Milward stated, it "was also the beginning of the end of the Beach Boys' long day (and longer night) in the sun." To be more specific still, "a dark, restless fear was blended into the fun and girls," giving *Pet Sounds* "the echo of melancholy."

Recorded in 1966, it was considered a rock classic by critics and, among others, the Beatles' Paul McCartney, who called one of the album's most enduring tunes, "God Only Knows," the best song ever written. And, from all the reading I've been doing on this celebrated CD release, the praise is as strong now as it ever was. For many a '60s adolescent—including those far from a certain large body of water and with a dreamlike fascination with surfing, summer, cars, and girls—the transition to a more sober, relevant style of songwriting, à la the Beatles (e.g., *Rubber Soul* and *Revolver*), was either a rude awakening or a welcome surprise.

With the exception of the commercially-oriented plant, "Sloop John B," the music on *Pet Sounds* flows as one. Instead of singing about car clubs, school patriotism, and catching waves (and girls), Brian and the boys—with help from lyricist Tony Asher—crooned about longing to sleep with (and marry) girls ("Wouldn't It Be Nice"), making it in the real world ("That's Not Me," "I Know There's An Answer"), confusion and alienation ("I Just Wasn't Made For These

Times"), and the vagaries of love ("Here Today," "Caroline, No"). These were, and are, eternal adult themes, couched in a more dramatic and romantic language and delivery. The bouncy, *Sesame Street*, pop-ditties style they built their reputation on—and would eventually return to—is only marginally present. For Beach Boys fanatics, there are three interesting bonus tracks, "Hang On To Your Ego" (the original version of "I Know There's An Answer"), "Trombone Dixie," and something called "Unreleased Backgrounds." The inspiration for it all came from Brian, a newly-discovered master of production, organization, and concept, not to mention songwriting.

Speaking of production, Capitol's mid-'60s experiments with "Duophonic"—a sloppy excuse for not recording in stereo—were an unwelcomed intrusion into the Beach Boys' albums of that period, including *Pet Sounds*. Was it just Capitol, or did the band have something to do with it? And then, there was the Phil Spector factor. You may recall him as the production whiz who had such an enormous impact on Brian Wilson, producing, among others, the Righteous Brothers, Rolling Stones, and, eventually, the Beatles. Spector's compressed, echo-laden, distant wall of sound may have been a roomful, but it put everyone and everything on, well, the walls and ceilings. *Pet Sounds*—recorded in "glorious mono"—was a product of the times, when stereo technology was beyond the grasp of many pop artists (Brian's hearing loss in one ear didn't help). Consequently, it remains a sad footnote, given that there are so many instruments—from harmonicas to bicycle horns, kettle drums, violins, oboes, vibes, and saxophones to "a guitar with a coke bottle on the strings for a semi-steel guitar effect"—producing so much sound . . . Brian's "pet sounds." The sound is full but flat, with seven tracks of vocals mixed over

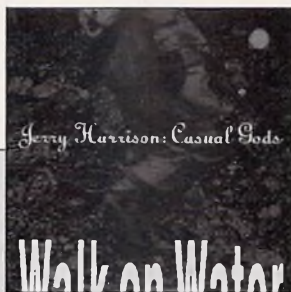
only one for instruments. Certainly, the Beach Boys were (and are) first and foremost, a singing group, but "pet sounds" suggest more than human voices. Oddly enough, the very charming instrumentals "Let's Go Away For Awhile" and "Pet Sounds" give the best takes on Brian's studio work for *Pet Sounds*.

Part of a CD-reissue program that will include all of the Beach Boys' albums on Capitol, *Pet Sounds* stands alone with respect to artistry, vocal, melodic/harmonic, and instrumental sophistication—a complete album from start to finish, relatively free of the commercial restraints to package hit singles. (And yet, the album still offered up at least four hits.) The 24-page booklet includes the words of Brian Wilson, production and liner notes by Beach Boys chronicler David Leaf, and lots of photos. Other top-notch packages include the two-albums-per *Today* // *Summer Days* (*And Summer Nights!*), *Surfer Girl* // *Shut Down, Vol. II*, and *Little Deuce Coupe* // *All Summer Long*. All in all, a very impressive program.

*Pet Sounds* represents the apex of the Beach Boys. Later albums, such as the early '70s' *Sunflower*, *Surf's Up*, and *Holland*, offered examples of strong writing, playing, and production from brothers Dennis and Carl Wilson, cousin Mike Love, Al Jardine, and Bruce Johnston, with occasional help from such unlikely sources as South African rockers Ricky Fataar and Blondie Chaplin. Yes, this former garage band could pull it off with or without Brian's help. In time, however, market pressures combined with the diminished talents of Brian and Dennis' tragic death from drowning in '83, resulting in a brain-dead, retro band incapable of anything beyond the cute, the charming, the idiosyncratic. And yet, as *Pet Sounds*' follow-up hit single "Good Vibrations" clearly demonstrated, Brian Wilson and the Beach Boys were capable of giving music lovers something they could feel very, very good about. **DB**

# record & cd reviews

"Midnight Blue," the title tune to his 1963 Blue Note album. The guitarist plays refined yet quintessentially funky phrases and his tone is less metallic than on the album with Byrd. Throughout the date, Hoggard conjures up both Milt Jackson—another blues image—and Gary Burton. The interplay between vibes and guitar on the album's two ballads, Ellington's "In A Sentimental Mood" and Waldron's "Soul Eyes," is seamless and tasteful. At the other end of the tempo range, John Coltrane's "Moment's Notice" demonstrates the ability of this band to cook wide open. McLaurine and Israel prove adaptable and swinging throughout the album. (reviewed on LP) —Owen Cordle



## JERRY HARRISON

**WALK ON WATER** — Fly/Sire 9 25943-2: *FLYING UNDER RADAR; KICK START; I DON'T MIND; CONFESS; SLEEP ANGEL; I CRY FOR IRAN; NEVER LET IT SLIP; COWBOY'S GOT TO GO; IF THE RAINS RETURN; REMAIN CALM; BIG MOUTH; FACING THE FIRE; THE DOCTOR'S LIE.* (56:25 minutes)

**Personnel:** Harrison, vocals, keyboards, guitar (cuts 5,7,8,13); Rick Jaeger (1,3,5), Brice Wassy, drums (2,6,7,9-13); Abdou Mboup, percussion (10,11); Ernie Brooks (5,8,13), Etienne Mboppe (7), Arthur Weir, bass (11); Adrian Belew (6,10,11), Jason Klagstad (1,2,5,9,12), Chris Spedding (3,5,7,8,13), Alex Weir, guitar (2-4,6-9,11-13); Tom Bailey, Fairlight (3,4); Dan Hartman, vocals, keyboards (1); Bernie Worrell, keyboards (2,6,7,9-12); Jim Liban, harmonica (7); Joyce Bowden (2,3,5-9,11,13), Sherrel Harmon (3,4,7,11), Sammy Llanas (8), Arlene Newson (2-4,6,7,11,12), Loveless Redmond (12), Tawatha Agee (1), Michael Webb (3,4,7), Vaneese Thomas (1), Djamil Mina, vocals (13).

★ ★ ★ ½

Sometimes being patient in passing judgment pays off. Listening to the first four numbers on Jerry Harrison/Casual God's latest album, I found myself doubting whether or not Harrison was ever going to emerge from a Talking Heads dance groove. While David Byrne has been expanding his musical horizons with a steady diet of Brazilian music over the last few years, I wondered if bandmate Harrison had been just gorging himself on old T. Heads tunes. The first four songs clip along with funky synth rhythms and driving rock beats. The choruses are straight out of the repeat-keywords-in-a-catchy-phrase school of pop songwriting designed to drill the number into your head. Some hot vocals by background singers, interesting metaphors in the lyrics. But overall, the numbers are not indistinguishable from any number of artists playing that same style of pop dance music.

Then, to save the day, Harrison mops up the sweat, leaves the dance floor behind for a spell, and offers up the exquisite "Sleep Angel," a slow, country-flavored tune that features a knockout vocal arrangement. It's one of the best songs on the album and is followed by another gem, the provocative "I Cry For Iran," a lament for the victims of war between Iran and Iraq. The tempo shifts in the piece, a collage of voices beautifies the middle section, and Adrian Belew contributes a wonderfully quirky guitar solo. The songs serve as effective damage control and pave the way for Harrison to successfully dish up an interesting mix of styles in the rest of the album.

The soulful "Never Let It Slip," flavored with r&b and southern rock, and the reggae-tinged "If The Rains Return" are both standard pop numbers with strong melodies. The most remarkable pieces include the intriguing "Cowboy's Got To Go," where Harrison half speaks, half sings lyrics about painter Jackson Pollack, and "The Doctor's Lie," a pastiche of avant-garde jazz, nightmarish rock, Moroccan chanting, and psychedelic blues all swirled together. Harrison even drops in a few funkified dance tunes that work in the context of the musical diversity. Lop off the first four numbers and you're left with quite a package. (reviewed on CD) —Dan Ouellette



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## THREE FACES OF FLANAGAN

by Kevin Whitehead

**N**eed anyone be sold on the virtues of **Tommy Flanagan**? Along with Hank Jones, he's the most graceful of veteran pianists who blend Bud Powell's right-hand virtuosity with the rich chordal sense of an Erroll Garner. He's a trio pianist extraordinaire—but as one new album and two reissues show, he resists easy pegging. 1989's *Jazz Poet* (Timeless 301; 55:36 minutes: ★★★★★) is a state-of-the-art trio recital, featuring chestnuts ("Caravan," "Willow Weep"), tunes you don't mind hearing again (Strayhorn's "Rain Check"), one dud (a bland Ivan Lins bossa), and one so old it's offbeat ("St. Louis Blues"). Flanagan's polish is self-effacing, yet it's hard not to marvel at the craft of his swing—the ways he delays phrases and then sends them spinning off to catch up to the beat ("I'm Old Fashioned"). Last time I heard the trio, bassist George Mraz's overamplification obscured Tommy's nuances; here, his amped sound's still a drag—his double-time figures *burp*—but at reduced volume, you can appreciate his fleet lines and time. Kenny Washington's taste, tact, and tactics brush off the cliché that young drummers don't know how to use brushes.

The '82 recording *Thelonica* (Enja R2 79615; 48:29: ★★★★★½) is Flanagan's tribute to Thelonious and his patron Nica: one Monkish original and eight Monk tunes that haven't been done to death—"Light Blue," "North Of The Sunset"—with a focus on ballads. Tommy understands that Monk's compositions pose a special challenge. If you don't bend toward his spare and acerbic conception, your solos and his heads won't mesh. Flanagan's solution to the resultant dilemma—to stay true to himself while addressing Monk's tunes on their own terms—is to lean toward Monk's blocky chords, splintered dissonances, and broken runs, while retaining his own exquisite touch. On the uptempo numbers, Mraz and drummer Art Taylor recreate the helium bounce of Monk's rhythm teams.

Flanagan's dozen-plus years as Ella Fitzgerald's accompanist had kept him out of the limelight till the '80s. For 1981's *A Little Pleasure* (Reservoir 109; 46:19: ★★★★★)—a quiet duo set with the too-little-heard J.R. Monterose—he returned to that discreet helper's role. Monterose likes his music intimate—he's said he hated his '50s stint with Mingus—and that's just what you get here. J.R.'s wonderfully melancholy tenor sound improbably crosses burly Rollins and tender Getz ("Never Let Me Go"). He coaxes the same deep feeling from his pinched, oboe-y soprano, as on the lovely "Nightingale Sang In Berkeley Square." Play this evocative album at 3 am, and your neighbors will ask you to turn it up. (reviewed on CD) **DB**

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# blindfold test

## 1 JOHN McLAUGHLIN AND MAHAVISHNU.

"Just Ideas/Jozy" (dedicated to Joe Zawinul) (from *ADVENTURES IN RADIOLAND, Relativity*) McLaughlin, guitar; Bill Evans, sax; Mitchel Forman, keyboards; Jonas Hellborg, bass; Danny Gottlieb, drums.

That was John McLaughlin and the Mahavishnu Orchestra. I can't say enough about him; he's the greatest. The tune was great, obviously influenced by Weather Report—particularly the tune "Madagascar." Great composition. John McLaughlin is playing his ass off, as always. I think that's Bill Evans playing sax, and Mitchel Forman. I like the way the tune built, really melodic and with great harmony. That's a 5-star tune, for sure. John McLaughlin was one of the first guys I was influenced by. *Bird Of Fire* is still one of my all-time favorite records. I look up to him because he's such an overall great musician, not just as a soloist but also as a composer and a legend.

## 2 JEFF BECK. "The Golden Road"

(from *THERE AND BACK, Epic*) Beck, guitar; Simon Phillips, drums; Tony Hymas, keyboards; Mo Foster, bass.

That's not Jeff Beck. But maybe it is. I don't have a clue.

JW: It's Jeff Beck.

SW: Wow. I'm really surprised, because Jeff Beck usually gets a better tone. The tone isn't like what I've heard from him and his playing sounded real McLaughlin-influenced. To me, Jeff Beck doesn't play that fast or do that much McLaughlin-like bending. So that one stumped me for a second. Usually, he fools around with his tones more. I like the tune. At the beginning, it reminded me a bit of Steely Dan chord changes. Again, I can't say enough great things about Jeff Beck. No one plays with more soul and more feeling and gets a great tone than him. He's one of my all-time favorites, along with Richie Blackmore and Hendrix. That's a 4-star tune. The only thing I'm not crazy about is that odd bar in there. I'm not much of an odd-bar fan. I like 4/4, so you can keep your foot going.

## 3 MIKE STERN. "Mood Swings"

(from *UPSIDE DOWNSIDE, Atlantic*) Stern, guitar; Jaco Pastorius, bass; Bob Berg, sax; Steve Jordan, drums.

That's Mike Stern. I like his guitar playing a lot. He's coming more from bebop, and bebop-type lines. I've heard tunes of his that I like more than this particular one. But he can write, too. I've heard him play trio in New York and at GIT, and he's a really great trio player, especially with standards. He has great time. He's like a really modern bebop player. In a way, he sounds to me like a young Joe Diorio; it has a lot of those great

## SCOTT HENDERSON

by Josef Woodard

A fusion guitarist without apology, Scott Henderson was bred on a balanced diet of both rock heavyweights—Jimi Hendrix, Jeff Beck, Jimmy Page, Richie Blackmore—and the fiber of the jazz tradition up through the '70s jazz-rock epoch.

A native of Florida, Henderson headed west to Los Angeles Guitar Institute of Technology (GIT) to study with Joe Diorio in 1980, and never turned back, working his way into sideman gigs with Jean-Luc Ponty, Chick Corea, and, finally, Joe Zawinul—in whose Zawinul Syndicate Henderson has played since the band's launching. Meanwhile, Henderson's own creative agenda was being fulfilled in his band Tribal Tech, co-founded with the formidable bassist Gary Willis. Now with three albums to its credit—*Spears, Dr. Hee* (his dog's nickname), and the new *Normad* (actually recorded in 1988 but stalled in the label-hopping process)—



CHIEL VAN DER HEYDEN

Tribal Tech gives fusion a good name (see "Reviews" August '90). The importance of composition and conceptualization of the music isn't sacrificed in the pursuit of better, faster chopsmanship.

This was Henderson's first blindfold test, conducted in his home outside Glendale, California. He was nervous about projecting any negative impressions about other musicians and hoped that he wouldn't be analyzing any of the L.A. pop-jazz so prevalent in the region. I spared him the pressure.

bop lines down. Definitely, it's 5 stars for the soloing, even though I wasn't wild about the tune.

## 4 ALLAN HOLDSWORTH.

"Tokyo Dreams" (from *ROAD GAMES, Warner Bros.*) Holdsworth, guitar; Jeff Berlin, bass; Chad Wackerman, drums.

After one note, I knew who that was. It's Allan Holdsworth and the tune "Tokyo Dreams," off of *Road Games*, with Berlinski—Jeff Berlin—and Chad Wackerman. Allan is another guy who I can't say enough good stuff about. To me, he's the most sophisticated modern guitar player there is right now. He's on top of everything—harmony, phrasing, chops, tone, production. He's really incredible. This particular tune I really like. His writing is really unique. He's one of the few guys who plays fast—with a lot of notes—and who is so melodic with it and the way he does it. With a lot of guys I hear play fast, it just sounds fast. But Allan has such a melodic sensibility on the guitar that it's very balanced. That's a 5-star item.

## 5 BILL FRISELL. "Resistor"

(from *RAMBLER, ECM*) Frisell, guitar; Paul Motian, drums; Kenny Wheeler, trumpet; Bob Stewart, tuba; Jerome Harris, bass.

It's Bill Frisell. The one thing I like about

his music is that it takes chances. It's not safe music by any means. This tune had a great groove and a great sense of adventure. The head seems like it's influenced by some of the old Miles Davis heads. Bill Frisell is a great guitarist, modern and different. That's the thing I like about him most, even though most of the players I listen to are quite a bit more blues-oriented than he is. I still enjoy listening to him and I like this particular tune. His approach to music is very chancey and improvisation-oriented. He gets some great chordal textures out of his guitar. I'm not wild about his soloing tone, but I like his chord work, the nice voicings, the best. I'd give this a 4-star performance rating.

## 6 MICHAEL BRECKER.

"Syzygy" (from *MICHAEL BRECKER, MCA*) Brecker, sax; Pat Metheny, guitar; Kenny Kirkland, piano; Jack DeJohnette, drums; Charlie Haden, bass.

I know this tune by heart. (He hums part of the head.) I've played this tune a million times. That's one of my all-time favorite Michael Brecker tunes. The playing on the whole record is great. And this is my favorite Pat Metheny solo on this album. Pat Metheny is another one of my favorite players, because he's a total musician—great player and writer. I think this is one of the best solos he's ever played. It couldn't have been better. 5 stars.

DB

## ANTHONY COX

**BASS FOR HIRE: DEEP SOUND, MONSTER CHOPS, PLAYS CHANGES, VAMPS LIKE A DEMON, LOVES FREE JAZZ.**

by Kevin Whitehead

If you want proof bassists have too low a profile, consider Anthony Cox. He tours with guitar hero John Scofield (and is on John's *Flat Out*—see "Reviews" Jan. '90). He's the favorite bassist of trumpeter Jack Walrath (five albums together) and young tenor turk Gary Thomas (three discs so far, another in the can—see "Reviews" Mar. '90). He's recorded with Geri Allen's trio, Craig Harris' Tailgaters Tales and Charli Persip's big band; he's worked with Elvin Jones, Jon Faddis, and Stan Getz.

You know how teachers say you have to know the rules before you can break them? Cox bloomed by doing the opposite. "Most people probably start with the blues and work out," Anthony says. "But I started with completely free music, listening to Derek Bailey and Barry Guy, and then started to play more traditional jazz. That was important: it made me cliché-free in terms of thinking about music. I approached all music with the same sort of awe and intensity; I had the same feeling playing changes or totally improvised music. I learned how to edit myself and spontaneously compose—elements necessary to every good improviser.

"When I started playing along with records, I didn't care if I wasn't making the changes; I wanted to make the notes connect, and sing. It was great ear training," he laughs: "I got to play with Tony Williams, Jack DeJohnette, and Art Blakey."

Cox was born in Admore, Oklahoma (Oct. 24, '54) but grew up mostly in Minneapolis, listening to his father's jazz and blues records—till he heard the Beatles, and began messing with a guitar. "Around junior year in high school, I started checking out jazz. One guy in school was into Ornette, and I started listening to the new music—Cecil Taylor, Don Cherry, Albert Ayler—but also Tony Williams' Lifetime, and Zappa and the Mothers, and everything Miles did after the mid-'60s.

"Then one night in 1973, Mingus came to the Guthrie Theatre—the band with George Adams, Don Pullen, and Doug Hammond. It was so powerful—that was the first time I heard an acoustic ensemble playing tight, energetic music that communicated on all levels. Something clicked: I said, I want to play that. As a teenager, the bass seemed to me to have a lot of class—a real jazz instrument. I felt an affinity with it—I heard the bass."



LONA FOOTE

He got serious. Beginning at 19, Anthony studied successively with three symphony bassists. "Playing classical music really builds your chops up—and your strength, because the strings are higher." Nowadays, that training lets him execute some unusual moves, like trilling notes with the third and fourth fingers of his left hand.

After two years in a community college, he got a scholarship to the Univ. of Wisconsin at Eau Claire. "It was a small school, and a nice environment—everybody played everything. I played in every ensemble there was: jazz, symphony, chamber orchestra, polka bands, cocktail groups, bluegrass bands. I went to school as a music ed major, but left when I realized I wanted to play professionally.

"I moved back to Minneapolis and spent two years doing the cocktail circuit and playing with a small group of rugged individualists." Foremost among them was free-jazz militant and multi-instrumentalist Milo Fine. Cox made his recording debut on Milo's '79-'80 *Against The Betrayers* (on Shih Shih Wu Ai), playing exclusively with a bow, another carryover from his classical training. (Cox says he's let his arco chops get rusty lately; he plans a return to the woodshed.)

In 1981 he made the big move. "I thought I had it all together till I got to New York. In Minneapolis, everyone played behind the beat, politely, trying to be cerebral. In New York they're really on top of it—loud, aggressive, in your face. I loved it, but I couldn't do it. So I called up Dave Holland and asked if I could study with him, and he showed me." It was while commuting from New York to Woodstock to study with him that Cox developed a liking for upstate living. He now lives in Kingston, a hundred miles up the Hudson from the Apple.

Cox admired Holland for the same open-mindedness he's exhibited at U. Wis. "I was blown away by how easily he fit into any idiom—playing free with the Spontaneous Music Ensemble, bebop with Nick Brignola, bluegrass with Vassar Clements—and still maintain his own style." The bassists share many of the same virtues: crack time, superior intonation, clean articulation, and sharp reading skills. But Anthony always had the warm, deep sound the great Holland grew into.

Once acclimated to the City, Anthony started "jumping into jam sessions, and honing my chops. I was 26 or '7 when I moved to New York, relatively late. I had already formulated what I wanted to sound like, and who I wanted to work with. I caught the tail end of the loft era, but then things began to close up. When I got here, at Mark Morganelli's Jazz Forum you could get a gig with a little quartet, and then the next night hear Charlie Rouse. You saw people in different contexts, and were able to take chances. But then the real-estate scene turned around, the clubs were back in power, and you couldn't get a gig without an all-star rhythm section."

Not that he's starved. In the early '80s he gigged with Charli Persip's Superband II, where he met future bosses Walrath and Craig Harris. (Jack's 1982 trio date for Stash, *A Plea For Sanity*, was Anthony's first New York record; his affinity with Holland is quite evident.) He played in a series of satisfying but unrecorded groups: an Elvin Jones quartet with Jean-Paul Bourelly; a Jon Faddis quintet including Terri Lync Carrington, who eventually recommended him to Scofield; Jabo Ware's Me, We and Them Orchestra; an explosive trio with Dewey Redman and Ed Blackwell. (Anthony was music director for last winter's Blackwell benefits in New York; see "Caught" April '90.)

For a couple of years Cox was in the co-op Third Kind of Blue, with reedist John Purcell and drummer Ronnie Burrage. They made one album for Minor Music before amicably splitting up due to creative differences. ("They wanted the music to be more pop-oriented; I wanted the Sam Rivers trio.") This fall, Muse will release *Falling Man*, Anthony's duets with reedman Marty Ehrlich.

Cox really shines playing Scofield's and Gary Thomas' complex but groove-based musics, because of his approach to ostinati: he keeps working variations on what other bassists would repeat verbatim. "If something's written out, it's my responsibility to play it. But in the context of the music, I've got to do something with it: interact with the drummer, and use it to make a statement that sings by itself. I love playing a supportive role: I can stand back there and be the orchestrator, put something here and there and make a lot of things happen." **DB**