

Taj Mahal • Craig Harris • Billy Taylor • L.A.'s China Club

DOWN BEAT

Jazz, Blues & Beyond

Feb. 1991, \$2.50 U.K. £2.25 Can. \$3.25

Chick Corea



The Mad Hatter Unplugs





Chick Corea



Taj Mahal



Craig Harris



Billy Taylor

Features

- 16 CHICK COREA: ACOUSTIC AGAIN!**
He's at it again, emphasizing variety, and on the acoustic piano, no less. And once again, it's the trio format. For pianist Chick Corea, electricity comes in many forms. **Fred Bouchard** checks in.
- 20 TAJ MAHAL: GIANT STEPS BACKWARD AND FORWARD**
It's been a long, hard road for veteran American "roots" musician Taj Mahal. You might say it's comeback time. With a new, star-studded album due out this spring, Taj is takin' it on the road. **Josef Woodard** places his bets.
- 24 CRAIG HARRIS: RENEGADE SPIRIT**
Take a trombone, combine it with a restlessly creative spirit, percussion ensembles, James Brown funk, horns galore, dance companies, or go it alone—that begins to tell the story of composer/arranger/conceptualist/bone player Craig Harris. **Bill Milkowski** takes it all in.
- 26 L.A.'s CHINA CLUB**
A talented, eclectic house band for one of Los Angeles' new hot spots provides the launching pad for wildly divergent celebrity jam sessions. **Fred Shuster** relates.
- 28 BILLY TAYLOR: THE PLAYER'S ADVOCATE**
Probably the most well-rounded of jazz musicians, Billy Taylor is the subject of more honors this year. The advocate/performer continues his outreach to the unconverted, as **John McDonough** discovers.

Cover photograph of Chick Corea by Harrison Funk.

Departments

- 6 on the beat**, by John Ephland.
- 8 chords & discords**
- 10 news**
- 14 riffs**
- 31 record & cd reviews:** Bobby Previte; The Pogues; Jordan/Davis/Williams/Burrage; David "Fathead" Newman/Clifford Jordan; Cole Porter Stomp; Bernie Worrell; Hindu Love Gods; Genius Tucked Safely In The Past; Paul Simon; Chet Atkins/Mark Knopfler; The Meeting; The Manhattan Project; Cotton/Wells/Bell/Branch; Eric Clapton: Lay It Out; David Liebman/Richie Beirach; Palmer/Liebman/Abercrombie/Nussbaum; Steve Roach/Robert Rich; Roach/Hudson/Hopkins; Traveling Wilburys; Robin Holcomb; Ed Mann; David Torn; Rahsaan Roland Kirk: Rahsaan To The Moon.
- 56 blindfold test:** T Bone Burnett, by Josef Woodard.
- 58 caught:** Tribute To Hank Mobley, by Kevin Whitehead; Musique Actuelle, by Art Lange; Sonic Youth, by Josef Woodard; Jazzfest Berlin/Total Music Meeting, by Kevin Whitehead.
- 63 pro session:** "Percussion Paradise—PASIC '90," by Miguel Gonzalez; "Hand Signals," by John Ephland.
- 66 ad lib:** "Parchment Farm," by David Whiteis.
- 70 pro shop**
- 74 auditions:** Young musicians deserving recognition.

DOWN BEAT

Jazz, Blues & Beyond

PUBLISHER John Maher
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR Frank Alkyer
MANAGING EDITOR John Ephland
ASSOCIATE EDITOR Dave Helland
DESIGN Jay Crawford Design
PRODUCTION MANAGER Gloria Baldwin
CIRCULATION MANAGER Elaine Rizerlis
PRESIDENT Jack Maher

ALBUM REVIEWERS: Jon Balleras, Larry Birnbaum, Fred Bouchard, Owen Cordle, 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 Welburn, Pete Welding, Kevin Whitehead, Josef Woodard.

FEBRUARY 1991

VOLUME 58 NO. 2

CONTRIBUTORS: Larry Birnbaum, Michael Bourne, Tom Copi, Lauren Deutsch, John Dilberto, Leonard Feather, Mitchell Feldman, Andy Freeberg, Art Lange, Howard Mandel, John McDonough, Bill Milkowski, Paul Natkin, 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; Philadelphia, Russell Woessner; Phoenix, Robert Henschel; Pittsburgh, David J. Fabilli; San Francisco, Michael Handler; Seattle, Joseph R. Murphy; Toronto, Mark Miller; Vancouver, Vern Montgomery; Washington, D.C., W. A. Brower; Argentina, Max Sellmann; Australia, Eric Myers;

Belgium, Willy Vanhassel; Brazil, Christopher Pickard; Finland, Roger Freundlich; Great Britain, Brian Prestley; India, Vinod Advani; Italy, Ruggero Shassi; Jamaica, Maureen Sheridan; Japan, Shoichi Yui; Netherlands, Jaap Ludeke; Norway, Randi Hultin; Poland, Charles Gans; Senegambia, Oko Dramme; 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

DOWN BEAT (ISSN 0012-5768) is published monthly by Maher Publications, 180 West Park Ave., Elmhurst, IL 60126. Copyright 1991 Maher Publications. All rights reserved. Trademark registered U.S. Patent Office. Great Britain registered trademark No. 719,407. Second Class

postage paid at Elmhurst, IL and at additional mailing offices.
 Subscription rates: \$26.00 for one year, \$44.00 for two years. Foreign subscriptions add \$9.00 per year.

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION: Send orders and address changes to: **DOWN BEAT**, P.O. Box 1071, Skokie, IL 60076. Inquiries: 1-800/421-9778.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Please allow six weeks for your change to become effective. When notifying us of your new address, include current **DOWN BEAT** label showing old address.

Publisher assumes no responsibility for return of unsolicited manuscripts, photos, or artwork. Nothing may be reprinted in whole or in part without written permission from publisher. Microfilm of all issues of **DOWN BEAT** are available from University Microfilm, 300 N. Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48106.

MAHER PUBLICATIONS: DOWN BEAT magazine, **MUSIC INC.** magazine, **Up Beat Daily**.

POSTMASTER: SEND CHANGE OF ADDRESS TO DOWN BEAT, P.O. Box 1071, Skokie, IL 60076. **CABLE ADDRESS: DOWN BEAT** (on sale Jan. 17, 1991) Magazine Publishers Association



Chick Corea



Akoustic

By Fred Bouchard

A quick look at Chick Corea's DOWN BEAT cover stories over the years shows a delicious pattern of no pattern: "Armando In Wonderland" (March 9, '78) explored electric Latin expansions, "Chick Corea" (June '81) prospective evolutions, "Elektric Again!" (Jan. '86) the roots of the Elektric Band, "Piano Dreams Come True" (Sept. '88) a variety. The 1991 update on his broad, breathless yet integral career could be called "Akoustic Again," because that's a direction Corea's zig-zagging back in after a banner year with the EB.

The Chameleon is still at it! 1990 saw comparative inactivity for Corea's Akoustic Band—that successful trio spun off from original Elektric Band members John Patitucci on acoustic bass and Dave Weckl on drum kit. But now they'll be together again on trio tours to support a fresh live album, *Alive* (GRP 9627).

"The trio's first approach was not to think too much about repertoire," Corea explained by phone from Berlin. "The initial idea was to play music spontaneously. I'd pick or write tunes that we'd rehearse, but they were sketchy, not highly arranged. The idea was to blow." The loose, booting feel of the band's debut (GRP 9582) shows relaxation and excitement aplenty. On a wisp of a liner note, Corea reaffirmed: "I like [life] crisp, crystal and refreshingly to the point." [punctuation mine]

The blowing will continue with some arranging on the AB's next GRP release. "We've rerecorded 'Sophisticated Lady' and another Duke tune, 'Upper Manhattan Medical Group.' Two Monks: 'Round Midnight' and 'Hackensack.' An old one of mine, 'Humpty Dumpty.' We even take a shot at 'Green Dolphin Street.'"

The mention of "How Deep Is The Ocean?" which Corea learned from Bud Powell's recorded version, brought up the evolution of repertoire. "A lot of standards written for Broadway shows were picked up by jazz musicians. I never heard the [shows] or saw the lead sheets until much later. I always wondered what the original versions sounded like, not Miles' or Bird's or Trane's version of it."

Corea has always seemed to be a most happy and comfortable fellow wearing more hats than the Mad Hatter: he keeps his ears and attitudes open, has lots of fun, plays in most every bag (post-bop, classical, far-out, Latin, electro-pop, new age), composes in different styles (string quartet, little big band, funk five, solo piano). Chick Corea is perhaps jazz's most protean and unpredictable character, or to quote Gary Burton, "the most prolific and versatile of any modern jazz musician."

Or, as Corea told *DB* back in '81 concerning the interrelated subjects of writing piano music for jazz and classical: "I continue to write piano music. Throughout the years I've written these little miniature pieces called *Children's Songs*, and I've recently completed the collection. I wrote four more and now there's 20. I wrote a piece for piano and flute, a duet that I plan to play some place, somehow. I plan to write some music for myself and Burton with a string quartet, orchestrated. I have various plans to write in that manner until, finally, it makes sense to write for a larger ensemble with the piano.

"I'm trying to break down the barriers, actually, between jazz music and classical music. There's such a rich tradition and a rich esthetic in both areas that I love to operate in. I see no barrier myself, but, in the world, it seems that the way business goes, there are two separate circles. There are certain places where classical musicians perform and play . . . and



Dave Weckl



John Patitucci

PHOTOS BY RON MOSS

certain places jazz groups appear, and never the twain shall meet."

Thus it is with Corea's various axes: natural facility lets him be totally comfortable with Bösendorfers and Synclaviers.

Akoustic or Elektric? What's the diff to Chick The Pianist? Not much, really. When asked about any perceived dichotomy between electric and acoustic piano, he demurred. "I don't think of them as different things," said he. "I live my music around live performance. I base everything I do—my whole art of music—on the communication that emanates from me and my group straight to a listener. Radio and recordings accomplish the same thing of getting my music to the listener, but [they're] mechanical media. I don't think of my music as going onto the vinyl of a record, but live to the listener. So whatever I'm playing on is of very secondary consideration. . . .

"An instrument is a tool that you use to accomplish something. I've always looked at instruments as simply things you use to make music. I've never thought that an electric piano was anything like a Steinway. Or that you were supposed to try to use an electric instrument to produce the kind

of effect you produce with an acoustic instrument.

"I was brought up playing acoustic piano; it was my first instrument. The very first time I put my hands on a keyboard instrument other than a piano, it was very obvious that it wasn't a piano. I was working with Miles, on that first record [*Filles de Kilimanjaro*]. There was an electric keyboard in the studio. It wasn't a Fender Rhodes—much less expressive than that. I started messing with it. It had a kind of organ-y sound. But I've *always* used different instruments to produce different effects and orchestrations." (On that watershed date—just on the cusp of both Davis' and Corea's electric careers—Chick replaced Herbie Hancock on two tracks, playing acoustic piano on "Mademoiselle Mabry" and that keyboard on "Petits Mchins.")

Corea keeps his life and art fresh and crisp by switching hats often, never letting himself go stale or pat. "At present, I'm giving a series of five solo piano concerts in the middle of my European Elektric Band tour.

The painfully obvious difference is that I'm alone. It's the only time I ever play without others. If I do a longer stint, say a dozen concerts, I work out a real program."

Corea's stable points are tunes and improvisations. He may work in a Scriabin *Prelude* [ECM 1310] or select a *Goldberg Variation* to play a bit of Bach. The only other written piano music he plays are his *Children's Songs*.

"I do like to play solo concerts, but I can only do a handful at a time. The real fun of making music comes for me with playing with musicians on the stage."

Duets have carved special niches in Corea's career. Going heart-to-heart with fellow musicians—especially pianists—has been a heady hallmark of a long, dappled career. Encounters with Herbie Hancock (collaborative keyboardist in Davis' proto-electric band), Tete Montoliu (Catalonia's great piano poet), windmaster Steve Kujala, and vibraphonist Gary Burton have all spiced up and dazzled Corea's career, well along into, and perfectly complementary to, his fusion phases.

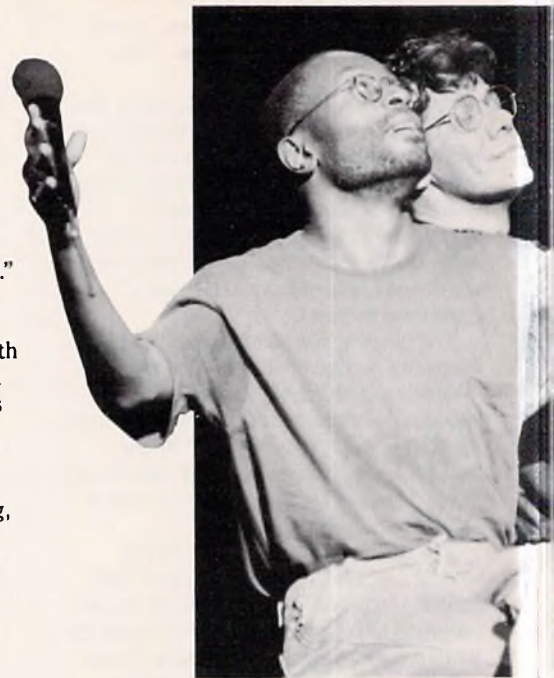
"Duets are special because there's only one other. It's a very concentrated line. My latest duet partner is Bobby McFerrin. We just did six concerts in the U.S. It was a lotta, lotta fun. We'd both like to do more. We had a ball. We recorded one

concert, and it might come out on record." Other vocalists Corea has worked with include Flora Purim (the early phase of Return To Forever, a band co-founded with Stanley Clarke that first catapulted Corea as a leader into the national limelight), his wife Gayle Moran, and Al Jarreau.

"As I've spent most of my life playing instrumental music, the challenge [with Bobby McFerrin] is song and lyric writing, and how to use the form." Corea has written a few tunes with lyricists; Neville Potter and he collaborated on "500 Miles High" and "What Game Shall We Play Today?"; he and Flora on "Light As A Feather." Lyrics put to "Crystal Silence" were not sung.

Old friend and "duologist" Gary Burton (four duo albums over 20 years) had this to say about Corea as duo partner: "Playing with Chick is like a conversation with your best friend: you anticipate each other and know where you're headed. Whatever the other person can think of to do, Chick's versatility and fluency [let him] react quickly and comfortably. Chick has been the single most important musician in my life." Then he told an awesome anecdote about Chick's composing *Lyric Suite For Sextet* in a matter of 10 days. Burton and Corea will tour (at least) the Midwest in May and may make an overdue album.

Herbie Hancock and Chick Corea



Bobby McFerrin and Chick Corea

When asked about cross-pollinating acoustic and electric instruments, Corea replied: "In the beginning of the Elektric Band we used acoustic bass a little bit; there are possibilities that way. It's easy for John to get a good, rich sound through the amplifier. I gave up trying to put the acoustic piano through too much amplification. Orchestration-wise, electric instruments work better together than mixed."

The problems are not with the timbres, which Corea averred can be quite wonderful between electric piano and acoustic bass, but with performance. "In the studio," he continued, "you can mix them fine. But in concert, miking them is the problem. The area from which the piano sound comes is quite large, the sounding board. When you spread the miking across it, you find yourself losing many of the nice sounds of the instrument. You have to equalize out timbres that give the instrument its character, so that you might as well be playing electric."

This reviewer couldn't help asking Corea if, as it appears, he always has a ball on stage. "It's a measure of a good evening if I'm having fun when I play. It's the general intent in life—myself, of course, and my band, my friends, my relatives, and my audience—to do well, to have some fun. Heh heh. To have fun is a measure of your doing well. Whether playing music or whatever. Making music for an audience is very creative; it's unusual, considering how most human beings spend the hours of their lives. Those moments using your



ANDREW LEFLEY

imagination to create things to show your friends and entertain them take a relatively short, if productive, amount of time. It's basic [for people] to want to entertain one another. To me, all of that is having a good time.

"[An artist] is one who lightens the load of his audience and kinda gets them out there floating into the participation of creation that's occurring, whether it's a movie, or a painting, or whatever. It's a measure of success to me. You don't have to be jumping up and down and smiling and laughing . . . but if you're not relaxed, then your audience won't be relaxed.

"Every time I get onstage in a different city there's a different collection of people. It's always a challenge because they have different degrees of familiarity with what they're about to hear. My own particular code as a performer is this: it's up to me to do something for an audience, not to say that was a great audience or a lousy audience. It's the performer's job. The very fact that they paid money and took an evening to sit in front of me is a very huge reach. They actually left their houses and routines and walked into this concert hall or club to spend an evening of their lives. There they are! The results of the evening are up to me and my group."

Trios have always been Corea's basic building block for bands. (Even RTF was a trio before Joe Farrell and Airtio and Flora joined The Force.) Just as Corea built the five-man Elektric Band up from a trio, this Akoustic Band, still a trio, may see expansion into the future. Stay in touch.

DB

CHICK COREA'S EQUIPMENT

At home and at his Mad Hatter Studio in L.A., Corea enjoys playing on several grand pianos. "There was a period when I was collecting and buying and selling pianos like mad. There's a 15-year-old Steinway D at Mad Hatter that's very well maintained, [as well as] a 20-year-old Bösendorfer concert grand I got for Gayle secondhand. I keep two in my living room: a Bösendorfer Imperial that I got about 18 years ago; when it's well-maintained, a Bösendorfer is a wonderful instrument. There's also a little Yamaha upright Disclavier. It's a regular acoustic piano with a recording mechanism attached to it like a player piano, but digital, with a floppy disk. You can play something, record it, and have it play back. It's amazing how close it comes to the original performance. The dynamic range is cut down somewhat, but it picks up enough subtleties to be believable."

On the road, Corea seeks out Yamaha, largely because he can depend on service. "The Yamaha nine-foot grand, the CF-3, is mechanically as good as the Steinway and others. It comes down to maintenance, and the abilities of the piano technician who has been caring for it that evening. The tuning of a grand piano is very complex and painstaking: each note is made up of three long strings which have to be tuned to incredibly high tensions. You get into the subject of physics here. When you press a key, there are 50 little moving parts to the action. Yamaha has figured out how to maintain a piano as it left the factory. They send a Yamaha trained technician into their high-market areas, who assures that it will be in good condition and in good tune."

When playing solo, Corea uses neither electric pickups nor other attachments to the piano. "Half the time there's not even a p.a., and when there's a little sound reinforcement, it's just open mikes. With the Trio, I need a little help from the pickup and I use the C-ducer, a pickup taped underneath the sound board, in combination with the open mikes to get a full sound."

CHICK COREA SELECTED ACOUSTIC DISCOGRAPHY

solo

PIANO IMPROVISATIONS I, II—ECM 811 979, 829 190
DELPHI I, II, III—Polydor 6208
CHILDREN'S SONGS—ECM 815 680

duets with Gary Burton

CRYSTAL SILENCE—ECM 831 331
DUET—ECM 829 941
IN CONCERT, ZURICH—ECM 821 415
LYRIC SUITE FOR SEXTET—ECM 1260

other duets

THE MEETING—Philips 410 399 (w/ Friedrich Gulda)
AND HERBIE HANCOCK—Polydor 835 680
AN EVENING WITH . . . —Columbia 35663 (w/ Herbie Hancock)
VOYAGE—ECM 823 468 (w/ Steve Kujala)
LUNCH IN L. A.—Contemporary 14004 (w/Tete Montoliu)

trio

THE ACOUSTIC BAND—GRP 9582
A.R.C.—ECM 833 678
NOW HE SINGS, NOW HE SOBS—Blue Note 90055
TRIO MUSIC—2-ECM 827 702
TRIO MUSIC LIVE IN EUROPE—ECM 827 769

as a sideman

CIRCULUS—Blue Note LA-82-J2 (w/ Circle)
FILLES DE KILIMANJARO—Columbia CK 46116 (w/ Miles Davis)
REUNION BAND—Real Time 3004 (w/ John Benitz)
SKATEBOARD PARK—Xanadu 174 (w/ Joe Farrell)
SWEET RAIN—Verve 815 054 (w/ Stan Getz)
TRIO—Enja 4028 (w/ Bennie Wallace)
GRIFFITHS PARK COLLECTION—Elektra/Musician 60025, 60262

classical

BARTOK: TOCCATA—Polydor 26638 (with Herbie Hancock)



TAJ MAHAL

GIANT

Backward & Forward

by Josef Woodard

A sunny winter's Monday has broken in the Los Angeles office of Private Music, where recent signee Taj Mahal has agreed to play at a luncheon for a modest cluster of industry and press types. "In the popular vernacular, wha's up?" mugs the irrespressible Mahal, taking charge of the Private office stage (the record company building is a remodeled old theater on Melrose).

Wielding only his capo-choked acoustic guitar and his trademarked bag of vocal inflections, the dayglo-bedecked Mahal takes approximately one chorus to win over a glum "show me" work-day bunch. But then, working solo is one of Mahal's finest metiers. For proof, check out his classic 1969 album *De Ole Folks At Home* or his memorable soundtrack for the film *Sounder*.

Raw, bone-deep funk and sweetness flow naturally from Mahal's fingers and mouth, as he sings out the side of his mouth or

lathers on teasing licks that have nothing to do with virtuosity and everything to do with taste. As ever, Mahal is unmistakable, a musician without precedent or peers. Therein lies the basis of his past business travails.

There may be a loaded jibe when he launches into a rollicking blues tune and eggs the crowd into a sing-along, joking, "Y'all better know how to sing. You're in the record business." Nervous laughter erupts, and the sing-along kicks up several dBs—almost against its will. Dipping into his nostalgic repertoire, Mahal goes out on a wistful note, playing the idealistic tune, "Take A Giant Step." The tune dates back to the late '60s, when Mahal personified the merger of blues, folk, country, gospel, Appalachia, and other potent strains of musical *Americana*.

For Taj Mahal, the enduringly influential roots champion, this is comeback time. His upcoming debut on Private—the first of three contracted albums—will be his first official domestic recorded work in about a decade (discounting a fine, but hard-to-find Gramavision album from the late '80s). For this album, untitled at presstime and due out this spring, Mahal has deployed veteran producer Skip Drinkwater and featured cameos by such luminaries as Bonnie Raitt,

Adam Clayton, Hiram Bullock, Elton John, Dr. John, Eric Clapton, and rumors of turns by George Harrison and Sting.

Seeing Mahal live, even for a brief lunchtime fling, it's like he never left. And, in fact, he never really did. Mahal has had a history of misadventures in the public eye, nurturing a legendary reputation and winning the respect of discerning listeners and musicians despite his never cracking into the exalted reaches of the pop charts. He's an artist with a stubborn cultist following, undaunted and untainted by fashion.

If Mahal has been a peripheral character in the recording biz proper, he has popped up regularly from the fringes of the music world (the fringes being his natural domain). As per his recent resume: you can hear his bittersweet vocal melismas and guitar on Jack Nitzsche's score for the Dennis Hopper film, *The Hot Spot* (alongside Miles Davis and John Lee Hooker, among others); he put out a children's music album for the

the legacies of rural black musicians and other indigenous ethnomusicological eddies.

A young Mahal felt less than enthused about what he perceived as the narrow-minded folk scene on the East Coast, Boston in particular. So he headed west. "I was interested in taking the kinds of roots and chops that I had and finding some of the new or old acoustic material and working with it." Enter the similarly inclined guitarist Ry Cooder. "Ry was one person I connected big-time with because he always heard the music," Mahal admits. "It wasn't the swagger or the stagger or the dark glasses or the pork pie hat or the look or the way you held your saxophone. It was the music—and there was a lot of music beyond what people heard."

Soon upon arriving on the West Coast, he had linked up with Cooder to form the Rising Sons. From all appearances, it was looking like a fast track to success. But the Rising Sons were much better prepared to

the context of duos and trios and quartets. Rarely have we ever seen an individual sit down in front of us and make a symphony out of 45 minutes-worth of music—with one instrument or no instrument at all, the voice and some hand concepts. That always interested me. To me, it connected back to traditions of the Griots and my African ancestors in terms of the music and being responsible, able to play like that."

Underlying Mahal's various stylistic twists and turns always is the blues, and, by mass standards, the blues comes and goes as the fickle music industry pleases. The '60s marked its first mass detonation of popular interest. "When it exploded," Mahal says, "the music business started making it look like a disposable thing," he breaks into a beefy, official sounding voice: "'You heard it six months. Now it is no longer of value.' I was talking to some young black players over in Africa and these guys have got a consciousness that goes back to the 12th

STEPS

Music for Little People label, and he lent a friendly musical backdrop to Danny Glover's narration of the story *Brer Rabbit And The Wonderful Tar Baby* for Windham Hill's Rabbit Ears series.

Coming this month, Mahal's music will grace the stage production of *Mule Bone*, a revival of a collaborative effort by Langston Hughes and Zora Neale Hurston (see adjoining story). It's a busy time for one presumed missing in action.

In conversation, in a private office, Mahal projects some of that down-home *bonhomie*, but he also doesn't even try to hide his bitterness about his rollercoaster ride in the annals of the recording industry. Talking to Mahal is itself an object lesson in improvisation, as one topic falls into one free-associative tumble after another.

Mahal was born Henry Saint Clair Fredericks in New York City in 1942, the son of a jazz arranger and pianist. For his part, Mahal was mostly self-taught, leaning towards folk-rooted sounds. After the family moved to Springfield, Illinois, Mahal got his BA in Animal Husbandry, all the while playing music and looking into

meet the future than the reluctantly youth-minded CBS, and the Rising Sons album, though nobly intended, never came to pass publicly—one of pop-music history's great missed opportunities. Later, the label's Clive Davis linked up Mahal, now a solo artist, with producer David Rubinson.

Of surprisingly major importance was Mahal's third album: *De Ole Folks At Home* consisted of stark, lustrous renditions of traditional songs on guitar, banjo, and voice. "On *De Ole Folks At Home*, I figured that you lose some of the intrinsic value if you try to translate those tunes into a bigger ensemble concept. Some of the roots of that album went back in a lot of different directions.

"One of the things that was really important to me early on was to learn how to play as an individual player—the space of the solo player. That was what always knocked me out about people like Leadbelly or Lightnin' Hopkins—that they didn't need to play with somebody else to amaze you. To me, that was a real important thing. Bob Dylan said that in the beginning, that what he wanted to do was learn to stand up on his own two feet, pick up a guitar, and play.

"What had happened was that most of us had grown up hearing bands and players in

century B.C. There are people here who can't remember what they did yesterday or last month or last year.

"I feel that the blues stuff is always there. It ain't going to change. It may change in terms of frontal cognizance about the music, but you can't get away from it."

Nor can you get away from nagging problems in the way the music industry deals with the music world. That subject is weighing on Mahal's mind on this glaring L.A. day. "People still refuse to deal with the fact that there's a lot of institutional racism in this business. If I came in and said, 'I just heard the "Star Spangled Banner" and I am so turned on that I'm going to go out and write a song that's just about like it and make millions of dollars,' people would look at me like I was crazy. They'd say, 'That's plagiarism.' Yet, at the same time, these guys will come down to a club in Chicago or Memphis, listen to these musicians, go out and play, and never once give credit; they'll suggest that they came up with it themselves, and make an incredible amount of money.



"When they do these kinds of things, and don't acknowledge the debt, plagiarism doesn't even cover it. This is more on the level of vampirism. This is something at the base of your cultural psyche, that you're



TAJ MAHAL'S EQUIPMENT

Mahal's principle guitars at the moment are acoustic guitars made by McPherson. He also plays a Howard Roberts cutaway and Stratocaster. For an amp, he uses a small Mesa Boogie stack.

TAJ MAHAL SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

BRER RABBIT AND THE WONDERFUL TAR BABY—Windham Hill 0716
 TAJ—Gramavision 18-8611
 TAJ MAHAL—Columbia 9579
 GIANT STEPIDE OLE FOLKS AT HOME—Columbia 2-Col. CG18
 THE REAL THING—Columbia 2-Col. 30619
 RECYCLING THE BLUES (AND OTHER RELATED STUFF)—Columbia 31605
 OOH SHO GOOD 'N' BLUES—Columbia 32600
 MO' ROOTS—Columbia 33051
 NATCH'L BLUES—Columbia 9698

really a vampire and you're trying to pull it off." He whitewashes Stephen Foster: "'Oh, I just heard this, de camptown ladies sing dis song, doo dah, doo dah' . . . give me a break. That's a classic example."

Mahal's commercial stock more or less dwindled during the '70s, even as he continued to tour with global successes. Mass ears turned away from the folky motherlode and Mahal himself dabbled in reggae and calypso directions. "Over the years, I just stopped [recording]. I got tired of beating my head against the wall. I was tired of putting out music that I thought was good and being liked everywhere else but in the United States. I finally said, 'Hey, this is not worth it to me. Emotionally, I'm getting torn up by this.'"

In the mid-'80s came a deal with Gramavision, the right-minded but market-shy small label, which never made the finished album, *Taj*, available to larger audiences. "That was disappointing," Mahal confesses. "After eight years not being out there. I had a good shot to come back, to take my time and put together a nice album." In a *Rolling Stone* feature last fall called "Artist's Choice," in which artist's pick their faves,

Robert Cray sung the praises of Mahal's version of "Do I Love Her" from that "lost" Gramavision album. "People need to know more about Taj," Cray wrote, "because he hasn't been on the scene in a big way for a long time . . ."

Being "on the scene" is one obvious obsession in pop music. But Mahal has carved out a deep, separate niche for himself, one grounded in roots exploration and the wisdom of the careeristic slow burn.

"People are always saying, 'Wow, man, you're a living legend,'" he surmises. "Living legend? Give me a break. Aren't living legends 100-and-some-odd years old? But when you spend 35 years in the business, people get to thinking that's a long time to stand up and take the abuse that these people are dealt. It's a kind of backhanded compliment.

"Man, let me tell you something. You keep learning all the time. Once you're on this trip with music, it's not like you're through at some point. You're on this trip and that's it. A lot of times when I thought I was stuck, it was just me. It was not the music that I was stuck on. You're on the trip." **DB**

Mule Bone—Down-home Blues Hit Broadway

"**T**his play was never done because the authors fell out." So notes a terse, handwritten comment by poet Langston Hughes on a manuscript long buried in his archives.

Mule Bone, a 1930 collaboration between Hughes and folklorist/novelist Zora Neale Hurston which was never published nor produced because of the feud (reportedly a lover's spat), thus laid dormant for 60 years. Now, however, the play will open on February 14 with music composed by Taj Mahal, bringing a full dose of down-home country blues to Broadway for the first time.

The genesis of the patently overdue birth of *Mule Bone*, a love triangle comedy set in Hurston's Eatonville, Florida, sent the manuscript on a convoluted path leading from the Hurston estate through the hands of various literary scholars and dramatists before landing on the desk of Lincoln Center dramaturg Ann Cattenno, who singled out the work as "something really special." From there, a decision to replace the traditional blues songs injected into the script by the authors with original Hughes blues poetry set to music brought Mahal on board as composer and music director.

Mahal, who clearly reveled in the luxury of working with the richness of Hughes' lyrics, also expressed great satisfaction over having plenty of time for the music to germinate. As with the process he underwent in scoring the film *Souther*, he says that "something comes up out of the gut and starts singing in my

head." As for the results, says Hughes biographer Arnold Rampersad, "I believe that Langston would have been overwhelmed."

When casting got under way, director Michael Schultz was chagrined to find that many accomplished black actors were simply unable to make a natural connection to the rural roots that the work embodies—it would be easier to make an actor out of a musician than to try to make a bluesman of an actor. Louisiana-born Kenny Neal got the lead. Although Neal's own music is electric and contemporary, he is completely comfortable with acoustic country blues. "That's the kind of stuff I was brought up with," he says, adding that his father, blues harpist Rafal Neal, his grandmother, and other elders in Baton Rouge were especially helpful in his preparation for the part.

For Mahal, the most gratifying aspect of the project is that the prestige of a Broadway show may help to boost the acceptance of blues among the vast majority of black Americans who still largely reject it. "The validity of African-American expression has been trampled on by the African-American Church," he says of the blues genre after 30 years of performing for mostly white audiences. After *Mule Bone* opens, Mahal will leave New York and go back to doing what he has always been doing—hitting the road and keeping blues music alive with intelligence, passion, and pride.

—Kathleen Finigan

Now! Experience the electronics behind the MIDI revolution as you build your own computer-controlled music center

Only NRI's innovative, at-home training in Electronic Music Technology gives you hands-on experience with the equipment that's revolutionizing the music industry—Atari ST Series computer with built-in MIDI ports, Casio HT-3000 synthesizer with advanced MIDI operations, and ingenious MIDI software that links computer keyboard to synthesizer keyboard—all yours to train with and keep!

This year, over \$1.5 billion worth of digital electronic music instruments, from keyboards to drum machines, will be sold in the U.S. alone. Enthusiasts everywhere—professional musicians and recording technicians, even people who have never touched a musical instrument before—are discovering the excitement of today's electronic music technology.

At the heart of this excitement is MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface), an innovation that's transformed musical instruments into the ultimate computer peripherals...and opened up a whole new world of opportunity for the person who knows how to use, program, and service this extraordinary new digital equipment.

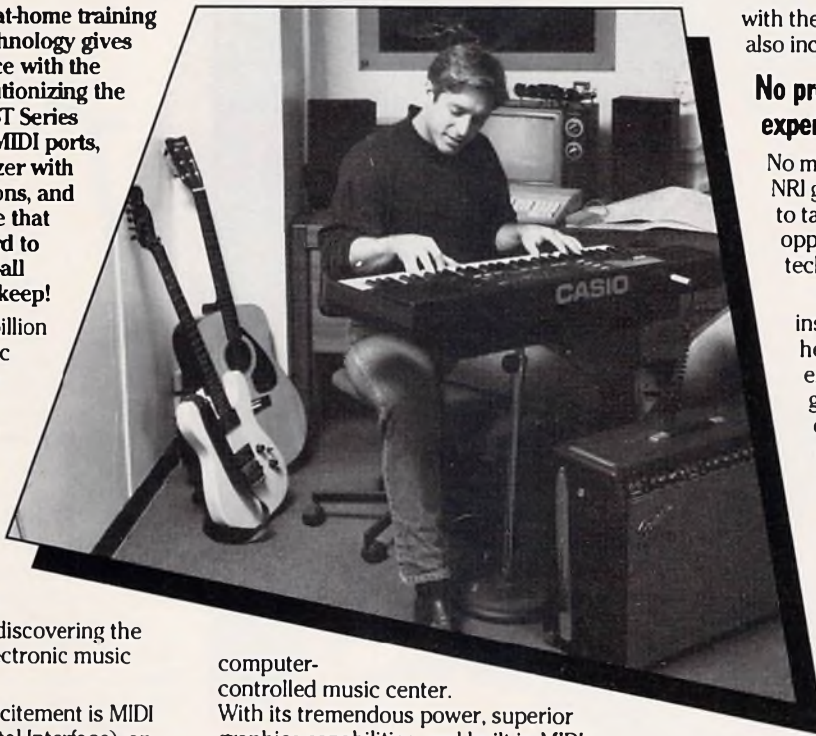
Now NRI's breakthrough Electronic Music Technology course puts you at the forefront of this booming new technology with exclusive training built around a MIDI-equipped computer, MIDI synthesizer, and MIDI software you keep.

Dynamic new technology opens up new career opportunities

The opportunities are unlimited for the person who's trained to take advantage of today's electronic music phenomenon. Now you can prepare for a high-paying career as a sound engineer, recording engineer, or road technician... even start your own business selling and servicing today's high-tech musical instruments. Or simply unleash your own musical creativity with the breakthrough training and equipment only NRI gives you.

Only NRI gives you hands-on training with today's MIDI technology

The Atari ST Series computer included in your course becomes the heart of your own



computer-controlled music center. With its tremendous power, superior graphics capabilities, and built-in MIDI interface, the 16/32-bit Atari ST has almost overnight become the computer of choice for today's most knowledgeable electronic musicians.

Your Casio HT-3000 synthesizer features a five-octave, MIDI-compatible digital keyboard with built-in monitor speakers, advanced tone editing and writing, pattern memory, keyboard split, tone and rhythm banks, chord memory, and dozens more state-of-the-art capabilities.

Plus you get ingeniously designed MIDI software that opens up amazing new creative and technical possibilities... you actually build your own 4-input audio mixer/amplifier...and you test the electronic circuits at the core of today's new equipment



NRI training includes an Atari ST computer, Casio synthesizer, exclusive MIDI software, and much more—all yours to train with and keep! (TV not supplied)

with the hand-held digital multimeter also included in your course.

No previous electronics or music experience necessary

No matter what your background, NRI gives you the skills you need to take advantage of today's opportunities in electronic music technology.

With your experienced NRI instructor always available to help, you master the basics of electronic theory step by step, gaining the full understanding of electronics that's now so essential for technicians and musicians alike.

You move on to analyze sound generation techniques, digital logic, microprocessor fundamentals, and sampling and recording techniques... ultimately getting first-hand experience with today's explosive new technology as you

explore MIDI, waveshaping, patching, sequencing, mixing, special effects, and much more.

Plus, even if you've never been involved with music before, NRI gives you enough basic training in music theory and musical notation to appreciate the creative potential and far-reaching applications of today's electronic music equipment.

Send today for FREE catalog

If the coupon is missing, write to NRI Schools, McGraw-Hill Continuing Education Center, 4401 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20008.

NRI Schools

McGraw-Hill Continuing Education Center
4401 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20008



Check One FREE Catalog Only

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Electronic Music Technology | <input type="checkbox"/> Computer Programming |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Microcomputer Servicing | <input type="checkbox"/> Desktop Publishing and Design |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TV/Video/Audio Servicing | <input type="checkbox"/> Security Electronics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Security Electronics | <input type="checkbox"/> Fiction/Nonfiction Writing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Basic Electronics | <input type="checkbox"/> Bookkeeping & Accounting |

For Career courses approved under GI bill check for details.

Name _____ Age _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Accredited Member, National Home Study Council

331-021



Craig Harris

by Bill Milkowski

It's an early morning breakfast at Sylvia's, a famous soul food restaurant in Harlem just a couple of blocks from the legendary Apollo Theatre and a short walk from the home of Craig Harris. Muscular and intense, he is seated across the table working on a plate of grits with salmon cakes and eggs. A restlessly creative spirit, Craig, 36, is unable to sit still for too long. He's constantly moving, shifting his focus for short, intensive periods on one project after the next, each a different outlet for his wildly original trombone stylings.

Last week the focus was on *F Stops*, his new work for trombone and four percussionists which was commissioned by the Mary Flager Cary Charitable Trust and received its world premiere at Roulette, the downtown Manhattan performance space that has nurtured musical visionaries and renegades for the past decade.

This week the focus is on Tailgater's Tales, his vehicle for extended composition and improvisation. The band has been rehearsing at Craig's house, gearing up for a tour of Europe. By the time they return to the States, his funky dance band, Cold Sweat, will start rehearsing for a stateside tour on the strength of its second release on JMT, *4 Play*, a collection of mellow r&b ballads from the days of the Delfonics and the Dramatics. Down the road there's more sideman work with the David Murray Octet, more solo trombone performances at new-music venues around the country, more collaborations with dance companies and more commissions (he plans to unveil his Elec-Acou project in the spring as part of the Meet The Composer/Reader's Digest Commissioning Program).

Always moving, constantly creating, defiantly uncompromising, Craig Harris is a man with several irons in the fire at any given time.

Craig had an important musical apprenticeship at the age of 21 with Sun Ra. After two years as a faithful member of the Arkestra, he hooked up with Abdullah Ibrahim and has since put in time with bands led by David Murray and Henry Threadgill. His

early albums as a leader, *Black Bone* and *Tributes*, showcased Craig's trombone playing. Since forming Tailgater's Tales in 1986, he has focused more intently on composing and arranging though not at the expense of some serious stretching by the soloists. As he puts it, "The concept of Tailgater's Tales is for the compositions to really vibrate and to inspire the improvisors. Sometimes people get locked up in the compositions so much that they forget about the playing. And I don't want that to happen with this band. It is a composer's vehicle. I'm trying to put out a concept, like Ornette [Coleman] or Cecil [Taylor] or Wayne Shorter. Their albums sound very conceptual to me and at the same time there's a lot of improvising going on."

On *Shelter*, Tailgater's Tales brilliant debut on JMT, you can hear the influence of his elders on certain cuts. The seeds to "Africans Unite" may have been planted during Craig's tenure with Ibrahim while "Sound Sketches" has the brisk, jaunty quality and abrupt mood swings characteristic of Henry Threadgill. The lengthy suite from that provocative 1987 album (which was dedicated to the world's homeless) is reminiscent of Charles Mingus' extended works. And "Cootie," full of swagger, is an homage to an earlier era.

Clarinetist Don Byron and trumpeter Eddie E. J. Allen make significant contributions to both *Shelter* and the band's 1988 followup on JMT, *Blackout In The Square Root Of Soul*. Unfortunately, both stellar soloists are gone from the current lineup. As Craig explains, "With economics being what they are, the group is now down to four—me, Kelvyn Bell on guitar, Leon Dorsey on bass, and Newman Baker on drums. It's hard economically to do it with seven. But I can do everything I want to do right now with four. And as a bandleader, you want to make sure that everybody's getting enough solo space, so with four they can stretch more. And I can stretch more, which I'm really ready to do now. Coming off that tour with David Murray and the whole *F Stops* thing, my performance peak is way up right now. I'm ready to play a whole lot of trombone. It's time to get out here and jam."

"It's time to get back what we had going on before this little conservative period hit. Later for that. It's time to step ahead and move . . . really hard-core. I mean, you can't forget the contributions of people like Albert Ayler and Sonny Sharrock; and what people like me and some of my peers have been doing the last two years, trying to take that and move on to some new music."

That hard-core attitude will extend to Cold Sweat as well. The band debuted in 1989 with *Cold Sweat Plays J.B.*, a tribute to the Godfather of Soul, James Brown. And though their recent follow-up, *4 Play*, is fairly sedate by comparison, Craig plans to

pump up the volume on the band's upcoming tour.

"Cold Sweat is not Craig Harris the trombone player," he asserts. "I really don't play a lot in that band. I dance and sing in Cold Sweat. I guess Cold Sweat is more for the masses. It's directed at people who don't really listen to a lot of music, especially so-called jazz. It's for people who wanna dance and have a good time. Live, it's closer to dance bands like E.U. or Toni Tony Tone."

Meanwhile, the financial successes of Cold Sweat are fueling Harris' real passion, Tailgater's Tales. "That's my main outlet as a composer and as a player. Everything else, like *F Stops* and the Elec-Acou project, feeds off of that."

As the name implies, Harris' Elec-Acou project will attempt to seamlessly blend the seemingly disparate worlds of electric and acoustic instruments. "I know people who play acoustic instruments and won't ever listen to any kind of electric music at all," says Craig. "And I know people who just sample things and have never played an instrument in their lives. I want to be right in the middle of that, where both sides maintain their own properties yet blend together nicely. So I'll have an acoustic bass with a warm wooden bass sound and also have that Bootsy-type pop with an electric bass player. There will be 10 musicians in all for this project and I'll be using a lot of my peers, the ones who have been interested in this kind of blending for some time now."

Craig himself has been experimenting with a MIDI Pitch-rider, which allows him to trigger banks of synthesizers and samplers from his trombone. He'll no doubt pull out all his hardware for the Elec-Acou project. And to represent the acoustic spectrum, he'll probably play his second ax, the dijjiridoo, a long wooden tube which employs circular breathing techniques and is indigenous to Australian aborigines. The mesmerizing drone tones that issue forth from this primal wind instrument have made a huge impact with audiences around the world.

"There's something about that dijjiridoo," says Craig, smiling as he recalls the comments of some fans. "When I play it, people can feel the vibrations. And the repetition, the drones really get you going. It's like praying. People come up to me after concerts and tell me, 'Beautiful show . . . really liked the music . . . but that dijjiridoo!' Man, that's all I hear. You can play your ass off on trombone all night, then you bring out the dijjiridoo and it just wipes the trombone out. You can't beat it. That's the thing that stays up on people."

Craig first encountered the dijjiridoo in 1980 while on tour with Abdullah Ibrahim. "We were in Sydney, Australia, and we went to this guy's home to hear him play this instrument. And the first time I heard it, I

went, 'Whoa! What is that?!' And I was circular breathing on trombone before I ever saw a dijjiridoo, so it was pretty easy for me to pick it up. Now I use it to color my music. It's a real interesting instrument. No holes, no frets, no bars . . . it's just about sound."

Harris made particularly effective use of the aboriginal instrument at last year's Jimi Hendrix Tribute concert at Town Hall in New York (see "Caught" Feb. '90). Those eerie drone tones lent a hypnotic quality to Jimi's slow blues "Hear My Train A-Comin'." As he says of that unorthodox arrangement, "I expressly did not feature guitar on any of the Hendrix pieces I arranged. The idea was to deal with Jimi Hendrix as a composer, not as a guitar player. For me, arranging is not recreating what that person has done, it's about doing something with it. And I take that role very seriously. So I took that tune and changed it around so that nobody would even recognize it. And maybe some people didn't care for it, but I know I felt very good about it."

Hendrix music, Cold Sweat playing James Brown, performing solo trombone, blending idioms with Elec-Acou, or tearing it up with Tailgater's Tales—it's all there in Craig Harris' music. And with his renegade spirit, he's determined there's no time like the present: "I feel it's time to go out there and really lay it out hard."

DB



CRAIG HARRIS' EQUIPMENT

Craig plays a Bach 42 trombone with a Marcinkiewicz 7G mouthpiece. His dijjiridoo is basically a four-foot log. On the high-tech end, he has a Korg M-1 synthesizer and a Macintosh computer with Master Track software, which is his tool for composing and sequencing.

CRAIG HARRIS SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader

4 PLAY—JMT (to be released)
COLD SWEAT PLAYS J.B.—JMT 834426
BLACKOUT IN THE SQUARE ROOT OF SOUL—JMT 834415
SHELTER—JMT 834408
TRIBUTES—OTC 804
BLACK BONE—Soul Note 1055
ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS—India Navigation 1060

with Sun Ra

COSMOS—Inner City 1020
LIVE AT MONTREUX—Inner City 1039
UNITY—Horo HDP 19/20
STRANGE CELESTIAL ROAD—Rounder 3035

with Henry Threadgill

WHEN WAS THAT?—About Time 1004
JUST THE FACTS AND PASS THE BUCKET—About Time 1005

with David Murray

MURRAY'S STEPS—Black Saint 0065
LIVE AT SWEET BASIL—Black Saint 0085
NEW LIFE—Black Saint 0100

with Abdullah Ibrahim

AFRICAN MARKETPLACE—Elektra 6E 252
AT MONTREUX—Inner City 3045

with Lester Bowie

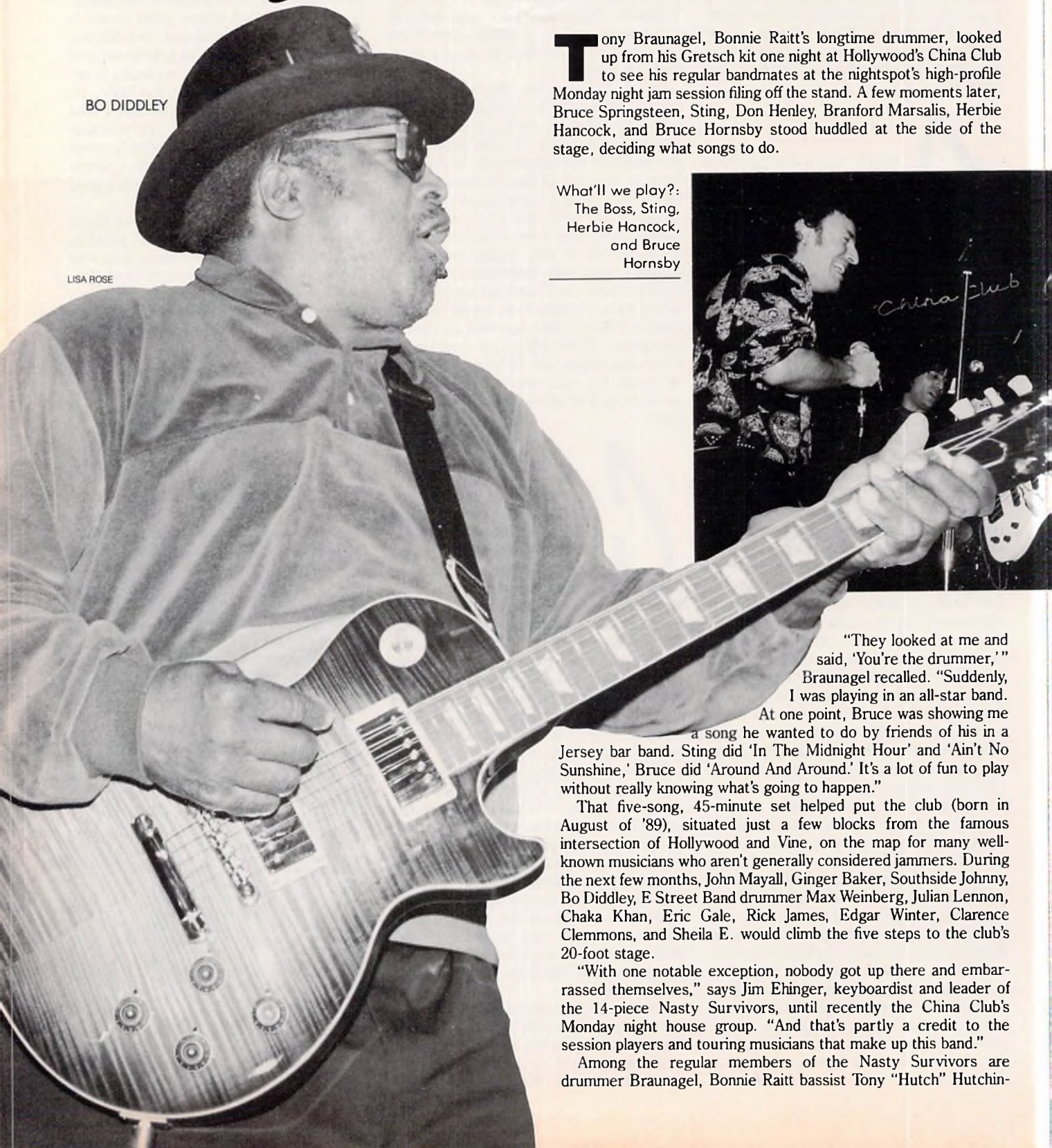
I ONLY HAVE EYES FOR YOU—ECM 825 909

LA's *China Club*

Mom, guess who showed at

BO DIDDLEY

LISA ROSE



Tony Braunagel, Bonnie Raitt's longtime drummer, looked up from his Gretsch kit one night at Hollywood's China Club to see his regular bandmates at the nightspot's high-profile Monday night jam session filing off the stand. A few moments later, Bruce Springsteen, Sting, Don Henley, Branford Marsalis, Herbie Hancock, and Bruce Hornsby stood huddled at the side of the stage, deciding what songs to do.

What'll we play?:
The Boss, Sting,
Herbie Hancock,
and Bruce
Hornsby



"They looked at me and said, 'You're the drummer,'" Braunagel recalled. "Suddenly, I was playing in an all-star band.

At one point, Bruce was showing me a song he wanted to do by friends of his in a Jersey bar band. Sting did 'In The Midnight Hour' and 'Ain't No Sunshine,' Bruce did 'Around And Around.' It's a lot of fun to play without really knowing what's going to happen."

That five-song, 45-minute set helped put the club (born in August of '89), situated just a few blocks from the famous intersection of Hollywood and Vine, on the map for many well-known musicians who aren't generally considered jammers. During the next few months, John Mayall, Ginger Baker, Southside Johnny, Bo Diddley, E Street Band drummer Max Weinberg, Julian Lennon, Chaka Khan, Eric Gale, Rick James, Edgar Winter, Clarence Clemmons, and Sheila E. would climb the five steps to the club's 20-foot stage.

"With one notable exception, nobody got up there and embarrassed themselves," says Jim Ehinger, keyboardist and leader of the 14-piece Nasty Survivors, until recently the China Club's Monday night house group. "And that's partly a credit to the session players and touring musicians that make up this band."

Among the regular members of the Nasty Survivors are drummer Braunagel, Bonnie Raitt bassist Tony "Hutch" Hutchin-

China Club

work tonight?

by Fred Shuster

son, percussionist Debra Dobkin of both the Jackson Browne and Was (Not Was) touring bands, and Bruce Hornsby guitarist George Marinelli. The Survivors have been replaced on Monday nights by the 12-piece r&b group lead by former Etta James and Johnny Rivers guitarist Kal David.

The concept of the celebrity jam session got off the ground at the New York branch of the China Club in 1988. But a few months

have great house bands consisting of players who are really successful and like to play. What I find fun about the situation is, you play with a bunch of people you wouldn't normally play with." Something like that happened early last year when Fab Morvan and Rob Pilatus, the non-singers who until late last year were known as Milli Vanilli, decided to drop by the Hollywood club after an awards show to jam with the Nasty Survivors. Ehinger said that evening was the "one notable exception" to his list of smooth jam sessions.

"I really couldn't believe it," remembers percussionist Dobkin. "I figured there had to be something to these people who had gotten so much acclaim. Those guys couldn't carry a tune in an armored car." The fiasco started in a club office when Morvan and Pilatus could not tell bandleader Ehinger in what key they wanted to do "That's Alright, Mama." After the Survivors kicked off the song, Milli Vanilli "came up and started jumping around and grunting into the mikes. There were about 350 people standing around with their arms folded. And I'm looking around thinking, 'Nobody's going to believe this.'"

Events got even more bizarre when the two dreadlocked "singers" started bringing people on stage with them. "At one point, I looked around and they had brought the entire cross section of the human race up there," Ehinger continued. "I don't know where they found her, but they had an 80-year-old white-haired woman up there dancing. I saw those guys a couple of months later and asked them when they would be coming back. They said, 'We can't jam no more. We got bad review.'"

What usually happens when a celebrity musician wants to jam at the club, explains China Club co-owner Danny Fried, is a meeting is first arranged in the dressing room between the musician and the house band. "Usually, they go downstairs and decide what to do. Or sometimes, very spontaneously, they let someone know they want to get up there."

In the case of Stevie Wonder, who stopped by the club recently, "it was like, drop everything, Stevie's here," said bandleader Kal David. Wonder appeared on stage behind the house Roland MK-80 keyboard and did a 30-minute set with David's band, starting with the Booker T. and the MGs signature tune, "Green Onions."

"He was everything you'd expect him to be," said David. "We know a lot of his tunes, so when he started with 'Green Onions' to jam on, we got into 'Signed, Sealed, Delivered, I'm Yours' and 'Superstition.' You could just feel the building lift off the ground. And off the top of his head, he was coming up with these amazing vocal parts. He got the singers into this call-and-response gospel thing that was wonderful. You have to be ready for anything with Stevie. He's a master keyboard player, and he's like a vocal clinic."

David said he also discovered that the Who's Entwistle "likes to play in the key of A, or any key with open strings." And China Club regular Jeff "Skunk" Baxter, famous for his lightning guitar solos on Steely Dan albums, prefers to play rhythm parts. "He's a very generous guy in a jam situation. He always says, 'Parts is parts.'"

Dobkin counted Elton John's appearance as one of her personal highlights. "He's a terrific keyboard player. He sat down and played like he was part of the band. When a great player gets up there and fits in, the whole band lights up like a Christmas tree." **DB**



LISA ROSE

ALLEN OLIVO

The House Band at play: (l-r) Nick Lane, Chris Mostert, Kal David, and Doc Kupka

after the \$2.5 million, two-floor Los Angeles club opened its doors, the West Coast version had outdone its eastern counterpart in star power. The Who's John Entwistle made the club stage his Monday night home for about two months while Rick James, Teena Marie, Elton John, Al Kooper, and Southside Johnny all performed at least once.

Little Feat bassist Kenny Gradney, who has jammed at both the New York and L.A. clubs, said he never tries to play a song on stage he isn't familiar with. "You know that old saying, 'When in doubt, lay out.' Usually, I really enjoy it, though. At that club, everybody's a pro and it's set up well."

Toto guitarist Steve Lukather, whose recording credits include albums by Michael Jackson, Elton John, Paul McCartney, and Quincy Jones, agreed with Gradney. "I like to jam, but a lot of people in this town are either too stiff, or because it's an MTV world, can't really play. But at the China Clubs in both cities, they



by John McDonough

Billy Taylor

THE PLAYER'S ADVOCATE

"You play very well . . . for a news correspondent."

Recently, Billy Taylor—pianist, educator, composer, and probably the most articulate performer/spokesperson jazz has ever had—was on CBS TV's *Sunday Morning*. In addition to the usual chat with host Charles Kuralt, he also played with his trio. A few days later, Taylor was back at the West Side Broadcast Center, where CBS News New York operations are headquartered.

"I saw your piece last Sunday," a colleague said. "Good."

"Thanks," replied Taylor. "Glad you liked it."

"By the way," the man added, "you play very well for a news correspondent."

Taylor smiled to himself and walked on. But that's what happens when you lead a double professional identity. You're a kind of one-eyed Jack. Half the world never sees the other side of your face.

Most readers of *DOWN BEAT* know Taylor to be a very good news correspondent for a pianist. But the fact is that most of the world probably thinks of him as an erudite, young music critic who

has lucidly discussed jazz on TV since 1981. They are, of course, wrong on all counts. At 69, Taylor is not especially young, despite his Dick Clark veneer. Second, he rarely criticizes. And although his erudition has carried both himself and the cause of jazz education a far way, he is fundamentally a fundamentalist bebop piano player.

His career began in New York in 1943 with Ben Webster, and included stints with players from Stuff Smith to Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker. Eventually, Taylor landed at Birdland in 1951, where he was house pianist. Many trio albums followed on Prestige, ABC, Atlantic, and Riverside. And he reached a truly mass audience as the bandleader on the *David Frost Show* from 1969 to '72. Recently, Taylor has been the recipient of many honors, including a 1988 National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Masters Fellowship (see "On The Beat" Oct. '90), a 1990 National Music Council American Eagle Award, and this month, was the subject of a two-day tribute at the International Association of Jazz Educators' 18th annual conference in Washington.

Yet, despite these credentials, plus a still-active performing schedule with his trio and the latest of four albums (*You Tempt Me*) on his own label, Taylor-Made, the profile of the educator seems to have surpassed that of the performer somewhere along the way. Though *DB's* Hall of Fame still eludes Taylor, in 1984, he received, ironically, a *DOWN BEAT* Lifetime Achievement Award—an honor established in 1982 to acknowledge the contributions of *non*-musicians (John Hammond, George Wein, Norma Granz are other inductees). But Taylor was not put off.

By combining the two, he has become to jazz what Leonard Bernstein once was to classical music—the advocate/performer who can make jazz interesting to the uninterested. In fact, since 1965 when he helped found the New York Jazzmobile, Taylor has been a genuine innovator in jazz education. And just as Bernstein once did, he has had the ear of the nation via CBS.

And if a CBS Sunday morning news program is an unlikely place to encounter jazz, that's okay with Taylor. "Most jazz critics write in jazz publications that preach to the flock," he says. "When *Sunday Morning* or *Time* or *The Wall Street Journal* talks about jazz, it gets the attention of the casual passerby. It makes him aware that jazz is not an obscure cult thing but a vital part of

American music. It keeps jazz in a dialog with the mainstream of cultural currents. That's important in a music that's easily isolated from the commercial marketplace."

Taylor has long known the power of the microphone to inform—and to corrupt. Jazz is the most relevant of all musics to the American black experience, he insists. Yet it is not recognized as such by the people who should know better. And the culprit has been radio. "It was radio that largely changed the perception among blacks of what black music really is," he complains with some passion. He refers to the much talked-about new book, *Hit Men* by Fredric Dannen (Random House), which documents, among other things, how certain black radio stations allowed themselves to be bought off by a record industry anxious to shove disco and r&b down the throats of young blacks in the name of black music.

"Jazz has operated aesthetically in a vicious business," Taylor says, "and that business has conspired to manipulate these perceptions for business reasons. A lot of the early black DJ's got caught up in the payola thing, r&b, and record deals. They went for fast profits, and since they were the principle music 'educators'

to a generation of youngsters, they cut them off from the best black music.

"Radio can be a source of information or disinformation. People denigrate young black musicians and audiences. They put everybody but the right people down. The people who did all this were the business people who wanted a quick buck. And when I say this, I don't absolve the black community from its responsibility in this.

"Musicians were often the greatest catalyst in keeping jazz before black audiences. Art Blakey, John Collins, and Dave Bailey used to put on something called *Three O'Clock High* every Sunday afternoon in Harlem. And at their own expense. But this should not be the musicians' primary responsibility. Jazz can't be a charity case. There should be a responsible business infrastructure that takes care of this automatically. [Producer/promoter] George Wein, who has done so much, cannot do it all."

The disinformation is not just on the radio. Sometimes it's at the very center of our educational system—the university-level music program. "Mastery of scores by Don Redman, Fletcher Henderson, Benny Carter, and Duke Ellington ought to be mandatory in every jazz music curriculum," Taylor insists. "Instead, student bands are playing these pseudo Kenton or Basie things . . . quote . . . 'playable by students.' But these programs are run by directors who may not have that experience themselves. So the student is cut off from this performing experience."

The academic problem Taylor has chosen to actually tackle, however, is improvisation. "From my perspective," he points out, "I hear bands that sound fine in ensemble. Then someone plays a solo and it's rigor mortis. So I've tried to deal with improvisation—to help students listen and develop through imitation and then move on to find their own voice. A pianist may ask me how to play like Bill Evans or Oscar Peterson. That's a good start, I tell him, but his hands may not be as big as Peterson's or his touch not as controlled as Evans'. So achievable improvisation goals have to be set, out of which the player will hopefully find his or her own voice."

Today, Taylor observes the overwhelming influence of Wynton Marsalis on many young players with pleasure. Does the next decade hold a long line of Marsalis clones, as the '30s produced a string of little Armstrongs? Perhaps, he says, but that's not all bad. "Wynton offers the young black player a great deal more to use than, say, Miles, who is too much of a self-created individualist to be a real role model. Wynton, on the other hand, has that sense

of professionalism, deportment, and control. It is a different, more purposeful kind of coolness. It says achievement is cool and this is music to be taken seriously. He's a renaissance man, and that's what's needed now."

And, of course, it takes a renaissance man to know one. **DB**

Billy performs just prior to receiving the Edward E. Elson Distinguished Service Award.



MICHAEL WILDERMAN

BILLY TAYLOR SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

WHITE NIGHTS AND JAZZ IN LENINGRAD—Taylor-Made T 1001
SOLO—Taylor-Made T 1002
JAZZMOBILE ALL-STARS—Taylor-Made T 1003
YOU TEMPT ME—Taylor-Made 1004
WITH CANDIDO—Fantasy/OJC 015
CROSS SECTION—Prestige/OJC 1730
ONE FOR FUN—Atlantic 1329
AT THE LONDON HOUSE—ABC 134
OK BILLY—Bell (Arista) S-6049
WHERE VE YOU BEEN—Concord Jazz 145
TOUCH OF TAYLOR—Prestige 7664

BILLY TAYLOR'S EQUIPMENT

Billy has a Steinway B, a small concert grand, in his home. He uses the larger Steinway D in his performances, a preference now specified in his contracts. He recently acquired a Korg T-1 keyboard for composition. This instrument, which he described as "a music workstation," enables him to experiment with voicing and instrumentation in orchestration. Billy writes music on a Macintosh II, using the Finale program, another recent arrival in the Taylor home.

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



BOBBY PREVITE

EMPTY SUITS—Gramavision R2 79447: *ACROSS STATE LINES; FLYING BUTTRESS; GABOO; BREAK THE CUPS; GREAT WALL; PICHL; ACROSS STATE LINES (REPRISE); A DOOR FLIES OPEN.* (48:31)

Personnel: Previte, acoustic and electronic drums and percussion, marimba, electronic keyboards, guitar, vocals; Robin Eubanks, trombone, trombone electronics; Steve Gaboury, Hammond B-3, piano, keyboards; Jerome Harris, electric bass, electric guitar, lap steel, vocals; Allen Jaffee, electric guitar; with additional guests.

★★★★★

As a composer, arranger, leader, and player, Bobby Previte has been consistently refining his voice, his attitudes, and how to jumble his influences creatively. Like other members of the so-called downtown crew often lumped together for convenience, Previte's broad-textured sonic palette derives much of its power from imaginative juxtapositions. It's an approach that horrifies self-described purists, who like to pretend that certain strains in the vast and encircling cultural web have remained somehow untouched by others. But then again, when was the last time you heard "pure" music?

In Previte's capable hands, Afropop, especially juju (Previte's a big Sunny Ade fan) and rai, floats and keens and stomps in a big way; it forms the album's spine. But there are countless other combinations. "Flying Buttress," for instance scrambles Duane Eddyish twang, Islamic trombone, spit-fire guitar raunch, explosions of white noise, and soap-opera organ swirls in what could be the soundtrack for a film about building a Gothic cathedral—if the builders were hallucinating. "Gaboo" is an off-kilter Afro-ish popper with Roberta Baum's breathily hovering vocals, Carol Emmanuel's harp making like a kora, and Harris' slippery fretwork slicing and dicing the piece's premises. (Baum, by the way, does a stunning Mid-eastern microtonal set of turns on "Break The Cups.") "Great Wall" offers Previte's pricklier take on minimalism, a tip of the hat to John Adams' *Nixon In China*, while "Pichl" ("a small town in the Austrian Alps. I've never been there," writes Previte in the notes) serves up a contemplative, open, airy, tinged-with-melancholy construct that does indeed feel like someplace named Pichl.

For like Eno's (very different) ambiances, Previte's forceful, clever pieces all construct altered realities, tell stories of imagined places created from the shards of increasingly fragmented cultures. The trick is in the continuity, how a recognizable sensibility refracts the exploded, rapidly replicating pieces. Now that adherence to a museum curator's idea of

authenticity has become a rallying cry, Previte's music argues for divergence and the freedom to ransack traditions however you choose. The freedom, in other words, to create yourself. A bill the aptly-titled *Empty Suits* fills. (reviewed on CD)
—Gene Santoro



THE POGUES

HELL'S DITCH—Island 422-846 999-2: *THE SUNNYSIDE OF THE STREET; SAYONARA; THE GHOST OF A SMILE; HELL'S DITCH; LORCA'S NOVENA; SUMMER IN SIAM; RAIN STREET; RAINBOW MAN; THE WAKE OF MEDUSA; HOUSE OF THE GODS; FIVE GREEN QUEENS AND JEAN; MAIDRIN RUA; SIX TO GO.* (41:44)

Personnel: Philip Chevron, acoustic and electric guitars, background vocals; James Fearnley, accordion, guitars, kalimba, piano, electric sitar, violin; Jem Finer, banjo, acoustic and lap steel guitars, mandola, hurdy-gurdy, saxophone; Shane McGowan, vocals; Darryl Hunt, bass, bell, congas, background vocals; Andrew Rankin, drums, background vocals; Spider Stacy, tin whistle, vocals; Terry Woods, mandolin, guitars, cittern, concertina, auto harp, vocals; S. Sheehan, harp.

★★★★

This is a terrific album by one of today's most intriguing pop acts. Produced by Joe Strummer, ex-front man for the Clash, *Hell's Ditch* is a return to what the Pogues do best: mixing traditional Irish strains with driving beats and Shane McGowan's guttural rumbles.

The album kicks off with the catchy toe-tapper, "Sunnyside Of The Street," featuring that classic Pogues sound of banjo, mandolin, tin whistle, and accordion. Sweet, upbeat rhythms and melodies provide an innocent backdrop for McGowan's unsettling version of what ain't on the "sunnyside": "Stepped over bodies in Bombay/Tried to make it to the USA/ Ended up in Nepal/Up on the roof with nothing at all." In that same vein, McGowan stirs up his version of a small town gone bad on "Rain Street": "Down the alley the icewagon flew/ Picked up a stiff that was turning blue/The local kids were sniffin' glue/Not much else for a kid to do/Down on Rain Street."

Like any good Pogues album, alcohol, illicit sex, shantyesque traveling songs, and a sense of humor make up the bulk of the album. If it weren't for the fact that McGowan wonderfully mumbles the words, no doubt the PMRC would be out to ban their records.

After the group's good-but-not-great 1989 release, *Love And Peace*, *Hell's Ditch* is a relief. McGowan's songwriting on the '89 disc was

limited and his vocals overproduced. Strummer wisely places McGowan front and center again, where he belongs. And the band, which kicks up everything from country two-steps to sambas to flamenco to jazzish riffs, perfectly contrasts McGowan's seedier-side-of-life rhymes. (reviewed on CD)
—Frank Alkyer



JORDAN/DAVIS/ WILLIAMS/BURRAGE

FOUR PLAY—DIW 836: *TOKYO ROAD; JAPANESE DREAM; I MEAN YOU; FOR MY NEPHEWS; HI-FLY; MISAKO—BEAUTIFUL SHORE.* (50:10)

Personnel: Clifford Jordan, tenor saxophone; Richard Davis, bass; James Williams, piano; Ronnie Burrage, drums.

★★★★

DAVID "FATHEAD" NEWMAN/CLIFFORD JORDAN

BLUE HEAD—Candid 79041: *STRIKE UP THE BAND; BLUE HEAD; WILLOW WEEP FOR ME; BLUES FOR DAVID; WHAT'S NEW; EYEWITNESS BLUES.* (73:37)

Personnel: Newman, alto, tenor saxophone, flute; Jordan, tenor, soprano saxophone; Ted Dunbar, electric guitar; Charles "Buddy" Montgomery, piano; Todd Coolman, bass; Marvin "Smitty" Smith, drums.

★★★★

In the '80s Clifford Jordan became perhaps jazz's best ballad tenor, with a luminous sound, rhythmic grace, unfailing blues sense, and an almost unparalleled melodic gift. So why have records under his own name been so few? (Much of his best recent work is on Art Farmer's albums for Contemporary—Clifford's "I'll Be Around" on Art's *Blame It On My Youth* is one of the best ballad performances in years.) But he's also a Chicago-forged tenorist who likes to burn; two new albums let him do just that.

On parts of the co-op *Four Play*—"Tokyo Road," Monk's "I Mean You"—Clifford cuts loose with shouting versions of his pretty murmurs; the shapely lines are recognizably his, but his tone's thicker, more hoarse. James Williams' waltz "Nephews" shows off Clifford's mature tender side, but Jordan gets brittle on Richard Davis' Strayhorn-y ballad "Misako," slipping in anguished, sour long notes akin to vintage Rollins' expressive uglies. Given Clifford's usual poise, the effect is heart-rending—like seeing your favorite dapper uncle broken

down in sobs. In truth, I could go for a little more of the unabashedly pretty Jordan here. But more than any recent album, *Four Play* shows how far he can stretch while maintaining his own identity—as on the opening of “Hi-Fly,”

where he incorporates bald bleats and butter-smooth notes into the same line. (I hate to slight his three co-leaders, but space is getting tight in the record review pages—send your complaints to the editor. But note that the trio

has its own companion volume, *I Remember Clifford*, DIW 601.)

Blue Head finds Jordan in a genial two-tenor blowup, live in a New York park. The side-by-side comparison with Fathead is instructive. Newman is a worthy, big-toned, and hard-slashing bluesman. But when Jordan slides in on his heels, he steals the limelight, by virtue of his strong personality. One thing that lets you recognize Clifford immediately is his vibrato. Rapid but not thick, it's a bit of a throwback to the old classic tenors, the ones who believed in hammering out a style and sticking to it.

Make no mistake, Jordan is not out for blood. This isn't a cutting contest; the occasion was too pleasant for aggressive feelings. Clifford Jordan simply sounds content, pouring it on—the way you should be at home, lapping it up. (reviewed on CD) —Kevin Whitehead

COLE PORTER STOMP

by Bill Milkowski

In conjunction with the **Cole Porter Centennial** (born in Peru, Indiana, January 9, 1891), two ambitious CD compilations have been released that celebrate his genius. They are as different as Night And Day.

Red Hot & Blue (Chrysalis F2 21799; 77:57; ★★★½) is the big media event, a celebrity-stocked novelty project in which today's pop stars have their way with Cole. And it's a *cause celebre* to boot. A benefit for AIDS research and relief, profits from the album and 90-minute music video are being channeled into King Cole, Inc., a clearinghouse established for existing AIDS organizations. In short, it's a '90s “We Are The World”-type extravaganza.

Basically a concept ripped off from Hal Willner (whose 1985 compilation, *Lost In The Stars*, applied the same formula to Kurt Weill and whose 1988 project, *Stay Awake*, used the music of Disney movies as the playing field), *Red Hot & Blue* is nonetheless a worthy endeavor. Through its informative packaging and socially-relevant interpretations (check Neenah Cherry's menacing AIDS-lecture on “I've Got You Under My Skin” and the Jungle Brothers' cautionary rap on “I Get A Kick Out Of You”), it succeeds in its aim to educate as it entertains. Musically, there are a few scattered extra-base hits among the strikeouts.

Verve's jazzy compilation, *Night And Day—The Cole Porter Songbook* (Verve 847 202-2; 67:54; ★★★★★) is not nearly so high-minded. Culled from classic vocal performances of the '50s, it simply revels in the grandeur of Porter's witty wordplay and timeless melodies. And with a lineup deeper than the Yankees fabled Murderers Row, it hits a home run almost every time up.

Not only do you get Dinah Washington's rumba take on “Under My Skin” and her swinging version of “I Get A Kick,” but there's also a lush “Night And Day” by Ella Fitzgerald, a buoyant “It's De-Lovely” by Sarah Vaughan, Billie Holiday's super-sultry “Easy To Love,” and Louis Armstrong's sly reading of Cole's droll “Let's Do It, Let's Fall In Love,” truly one of the great jazz vocal performances of all time. Plus, there are lesser-known gems like Bill Henderson's swinging rendition of “At Long Last Love” with the Oscar Peterson Trio and Shirley Horn's breathy, close-miked reading of “Love For Sale,” sung convincingly from the point of view of the prostitute: “Who will buy? Who would like to sample my supply?



If you want to buy my wares, follow me and climb the stairs.” And give Mel Torme extra points for cleverly weaving a quote from Bird's “Hot House” into the fabric of Cole's “What Is This Thing Called Love,” performed with his vocal group the Mel-Tones. The only thing on this excellent compilation not recorded in the '50s or early '60s is Betty Carter's sublime rendition of Porter's romantic ballad, “Every Time We Say Goodbye,” captured at a live performance from 1982.

On *Red Hot & Blue*, a few closet torch singers and big-band chirp wanna-bes get their kicks out of Cole: Lisa Stansfield on “Down In The Depths,” Annie Lennox on “Every Time We Say Goodbye,” Sinead O'Connor on “You Do Something To Me,” and Jody Watley on “After You Who.” Tom Waits gargles his way through “It's All Right With Me” like a deranged bagman while Roland Gift's naughty poseur attitude gets in the way of Cole's lyrics on “Love For Sale.”

U2's “Night And Day” is boring technopop at best while Salif Keita's “Begin The Beguine,” sung in his native Mali tongue, belies Porter's lyrical genius. The pairing of Debbie Harry and Iggy Pop on the urbane, highbrow ditty, “Well Did You Ever,” is high-camp that falls flat. Musical highpoints and most successful interpretations include David Byrne's samba rendition of “Don't Fence Me In,” Aaron Neville's stirring rendition of “In The Still Of The Night,” the Thompson Twins' tongue-in-cheek, punk-funk stance on “Who Wants To Be A Millionaire,” and Kristy McColl's keening Celtic take on “Miss Otis Regrets,” backed by the Pogues.

Red Hot & Blue is a reminder that the road to high concept is paved with good intentions but often marred by a few potholes along the way.

DB



BERNIE WORRELL

FUNK OF AGES—Gramavision R2 79460: Y-SPY; B.W. JAM; FUNK-A-HALL-LICKS; AIN'T SHE SWEET; STRAIGHT AHEAD; REAL LIFE DREAMS; SING; DON'T PISS ME OFF; BEWARE OF DOG; VOLUNTEERED SLAVERY/BERNIE'S BLUES/OUTER SPACEWAYS; AT MOS'S SPHERES; REAL LIFE DREAMS ON. (49:16)

Personnel: Worrell, clavinet, piano, electric piano, Hammond B-3 organ, synthesizer, synth bass, organ, percussion, lead vocals; Steve Jordan, drums (cuts 1,3), percussion (1), vocals (1), guitar (1,6,12); Charley Drayton, bass, snare, lap steel guitar, percussion (1); Gary “Mudbone” Cooper, vocals (1-5,7,8,10), drum programming, synth horns, samples, sequencing (2), percussion (6,12); Jimmy Ripp, guitar (3,5-8,12), banjo (4), electric sitar (7); Chris Spedding, slide guitar (8); William “Bootsy” Collins, bass (3,4), drum programming and vocals (4); Herbie Hancock, keyboards (3,4); Maceo Parker, saxophone (3,9); Vernon Reid (9), Keith Richards (1,3,8), Mike Hampton (7), guitar; Jerry Harrison, organ (8); Steve Ferrone (5,7), Dennis Chambers (8), Doug Bowne (9), Sly Dunbar (6,12), drums; Warren McRae (5), Jimmy Hawkes (9), Robbie Shakespeare (6,12), bass; Jerome Baily (8), Larry Fratangelo (3,6,7,12), Aiby Dieng (10), percussion; David Byrne (7), Phoebe Snow (8), vocals; Uptown Horns (2); various background vocalists.

★★★½

Worrell doesn't waste any time establishing his funk prowess on his latest album, and he doesn't stop to catch his breath until near the midway point when he takes a respite from the funkified stuff to play the lilting reggae-influ-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 45

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 32

enced, sweet soul beauty, "Real Life Dreams." Just when you thought you had a get-up-and-dance-yah! groove set for the rest of the way, Worrell turns the tempo down a notch and even gets a little reflective. The song is the album's turning point and deservedly gets reprised instrumentally at the end of the collection.

Worrell's forte may be his funk feasts, but the most musically-interesting tunes come after the tsunami wave of the first five party tracks. It's not that the blister-beat numbers aren't hot. They cook, especially the rousing "Straight Ahead" and the playful funk-addiction number, "Funk-A-Hall-Licks" (where Maceo Parker unleashes a flurry of sax scrawls). It's just that, except for the wonderfully surprising banjo-led country interlude on Worrell's synth-driven cover of the classic "Ain't She Sweet," there's not much funk freshness.

The best pieces are produced by Bill Laswell and come at the very end. The suite of "Volunteered Slavery/Bern's Blues/Outer Spaceways" is a perfect linking of a somber modern "field" chant, an emotionally moving Worrell organ solo, and a beautifully melodic rendering of Sun Ra's invite to interstellar travel. Then there's another Worrell instrumental on the Hammond, "At Mos'Spheres," which features a slow fugue-like opening and passionate climactic crescendos. Best setting for the performance of that composition? A church cathedral. Other tunes of note are pop collaborations with two Talking Heads, David Byrne and Jerry

Harrison. Big plus overall is Worrell's use of electrifying vocal teams (especially the Phoebe Snow-Mudbone Cooper combo on Harrison's "Don't Piss Me Off"). (reviewed on CD)
—Dan Ouellette



HINDU LOVE GODS

HINDU LOVE GODS—Giant 24406-1: *WALK-IN' BLUES; TRAVELIN' RIVERSIDE BLUES; RASPBERRY BERET; CROSSCUT SAW; JUNKO PARDNER; MANNISH BOY; WANG DANG DOODLE; BATTLESHIP CHAINS; I'M A ONE WOMAN MAN; VIGILANTE MAN.*

Personnel: Warren Zevon, guitar and vocals; Peter Buck, guitar; Bill Berry, drums; Mike Mills, bass.

★ ★ ★

Take three youngish rock legends and one who's been around the block a few more times. Put 'em in a studio and just add mayhem and a sack of jam-worthy chestnuts. Stir, shake, rattle and roll tape. *Voila*, you've got an insta-band which could only assume a moniker as cheekily absurd as the Hindu Love Gods. This ain't no religious act.

Warren Zevon, with that beefy werewolf growl recognizable from any distance, is at the center of the band sound here. He has deployed a rhythm section consisting of ¾ of REM: guitarist Peter Buck, bassist Mike Mills, and drummer Bill Berry do a yeoman's job keeping time and having a good time. They crank up the guitar dirt for gutsy blues odes, to Robert Johnson ("Walkin' Blues," by Johnson by way of Paul Butterfield) and Muddy Waters (the one-chord wonder, "Mannish Boy"). Various colors of boogie music ensue, from the blues, rock, and country sides of things.

Strange thing is, for the much-touted spontaneity of the enterprise, the end result is surprisingly tame, and straight up and down. It has none of the ethereal turns of the best REM music or the curveball wit of Zevon's custom work. If this is a spontaneous musical combustion, where are the mishaps and the loose ends? (Well, okay, there are some nice intonation problems between the guitars.) They do have the gall to do—or undo—Prince's springy "Raspberry Beret." The Gods must still be crazy after all this time. (reviewed on LP)

—Josef Woodard

BOB BERG JIM BEARD ART FARMER DIZZY GILLESPIE BENNY GOLSON CHARLIE HADEN

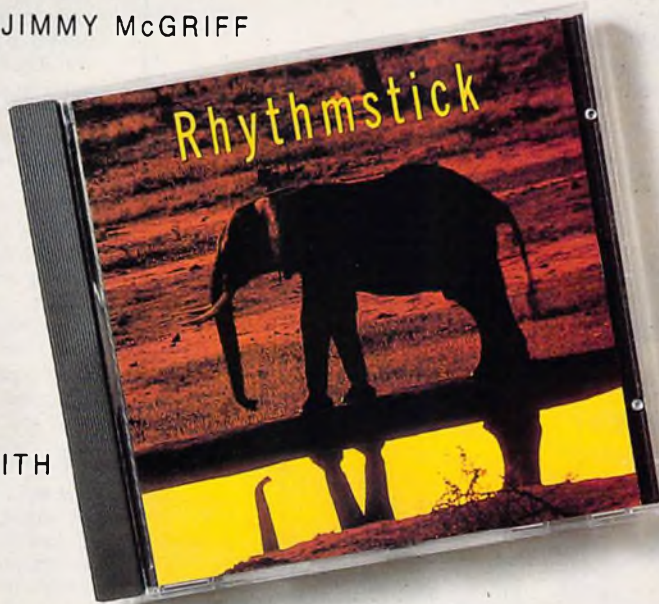
ANTHONY JACKSON JIMMY McGRIFF ROMERO LUBAMBO

AIRTO MOREIRA TITO PUENTE

BERNARD PURDIE FLORA PURIM

HILTON RUIZ JOHN SCOFIELD

MARVIN "SMITTY" SMITH PHIL WOODS



Get this. It's real. Produced by Creed Taylor. Available on CD and CrO₂ cassette. Coming soon on LaserDisc and VHS formats.



The High Definition Music Company.

GENIUS TUCKED SAFELY IN THE PAST

by David Whiteis

Columbia has finally released their much-ballyhooed *Roots 'N' Blues* series. It's surprisingly good, although it reinforces the bitter cliché that only dead blues musicians get appropriate respect: one somehow can't envision even living legends like John Lee Hooker and Sun-nyland Slim, let alone younger artists like the Kinseys, receiving this kind of treatment from a major label.

But on to the music. **Robert Johnson** was everything he's painted as: poet, revolutionary stylist, haunted visionary of highway and bedside (e.g., "Cross Road Blues," "Come On In My Kitchen," "Preaching Blues (Up Jump The Devil)"). The alternate takes on *Robert Johnson: The Complete Recordings* (two discs, CK-46222; 54:58/51:59: ★★★★★), from 1936 and '37, make it all the more obvious—if there was ever any doubt—that his art was meticulously crafted, "spontaneous" only in the sense that inspiration is spontaneous. Johnson's use of harmonics and chording was eons before his time, and his delivery and lyrics remain standards by which blues intensity is meas-

ured. The intimacy is eerie; you're in the literal presence of genius.

Lonnie Johnson (no relation) was a major influence on Robert, as well as nearly every other jazz and blues guitarist who came after. *Steppin' On The Blues* (CK-46221; 58:29: ★★★★★), from 1925 to '32, reminds us why: duets with other guitarists sing out in ringing, willowy filigrees of sound ("Have To Change Keys (To Play These Blues)" and "Guitar Blues," both with Eddie Lang), Johnson's fret-work melds sublimely with accompanists' backing, and he struts his remarkable versatility supporting vocalists as diverse as Victoria Spivey and Texas Alexander. This is the virtual birth of the guitar as a solo jazz instrument.

Good Time Tonight (CK-46219; 57:18: ★★★★★) should help dispel the stereotype of **Big Bill Broonzy** as quaint primitive (an image he himself craftily cultivated among bedazzled folkies in the heroic-proletarian-worshipping '50s). His traditionalism is documented here ("Long Tall Mama," from 1932). But, more important, are the small-group recordings (including those done in Chicago during the late '30s to 1940), including several previously unissued cuts that further establish his importance in the development of the urban style: "W.P.A. Rag," "Flat Foot Susie," "It's A Low Down Dirty Shame." Broonzy, despite the patronizing romanticization he's been subjected to, was a multi-faceted artist who's restored here to the stature and dignity he

deserves.

Speaking of stature, **Willie Dixon: The Big Three Trio** (CK-46216; 56:16: ★★½) documents the first major opportunity Dixon had (from 1947-'52) to indulge his creativity and unerring commercial instincts. The music, alas, hasn't aged well. As close harmonizers, the Three were adequate at best—limited range, pedestrian harmonies, emotionally vapid—and the material they chose was relentlessly middle-of-the-road: "If The Sea Was Whiskey," "Juice-Head Bartender." It's partially redeemed by their innate musical sensibilities: Dixon's solos demonstrate admirable facility, and pianist Leonard "Baby Doo" Caston provides a steady-rolling foundation. Others included guitarists Bernardo Dennis and, later, Ollie Crawford.

Cajun, Vol. 1: Abbeville Breakdown 1929-1939 (CK-46220; 61:25: ★★★★★) is a sleeper: few blues or r&b artists outside Louisiana owe much to this music, and one wonders if the mainstream blues audience is ready for it. But on its own terms, it's unassailable: highly-charged and propulsive, layered with complex harmonic subtleties and that hypnotic modal drone, at least temporarily liberating the accordion from its cubicle in Myron Floren hell. The liner notes set the scene brilliantly and help make this disc much more accessible than one might expect.

The music on *The Slide Guitar: Bottles, Knives, & Steel* (CK-46218; 57:38: ★★★★★½) is more familiar, although the set admirably avoids clichés and introduces listeners to artists (Buddy Woods, Sister O.M. Terrell) many might otherwise miss. Ranging from hokum good-timery ("Bottleneck Blues" by Sylvester Weaver and Walter Beasley) through soul-baring eloquence (Blind Willie Johnson's "Dark Was The Night"), it's an excursion across one of the blues' most emotionally charged and haunting landscapes. (Songs date from as early as 1927 to as recently as 1965, but all played in the pre-World War II style.) If "Dark Was The Night" doesn't send chills down your spine, you ain't got one.

In contrast, *News & The Blues: Telling It Like It Is* (CK-46217; 59:05: ★★) could've been a penetrating historical document covering material from 1927 through 1953, but it suffers from an odd lack of focus. Gospel songs ("If I Had My Way I'd Tear The Building Down" by Blind Willie Johnson) and a reworking of the Frankie and Johnny legend ("Frankie" by Mississippi John Hurt) take up space that would've been better utilized by pithier social commentary. And the "Roots" theme keeps things tucked safely in the past—maybe someone at Columbia got cold feet.

Finally, after the richness and diversity of much of what's gone before, *Legends Of The Blues, Volume One* (CK-46215; 59:02: ★★★★★)—ranging from 1925 to a 1965 Son House recording of "Death Letter"—seems almost like an afterthought. Most of these artists are anthologized elsewhere, and the programming jars: Bessie Smith's classic style ("St. Louis Blues") set against the stark emotionality of Blind Lemon Jefferson ("Match Box Blues"), the urbane Lonnie Johnson ("Low Down St. Louis Blues") contrasting harshly with Charley Patton's raw, Delta intensity ("Revenue Man Blues"). It's enjoyable but it lacks the sense of purpose this series purports. (all reviewed on CD)

DB

NICK BRIGNOLA SAYS IT THIS WAY...

"Runyon mouthpieces give me a consistent sound and equal response in all registers including the extreme upper register and the extreme lower register. I also find that by using Runyon mouthpieces on all my horns it makes for easier doubling. The Spoiler and the innovative inserts just add more flexibility and potential to each mouthpiece. I recommend them highly!!"

"And once again Runyon has solved a problem that plagues most saxophone players with his palm key risers. It makes playing up there so much easier. The thumb rest makes the horn feel more secure and is definitely more comfortable! Bravo!!"

Nick Brignola

Listen to Runyon Mouthpieces on Nick Brignola's Album "RAINCHECK". Reservoir Records RSR-CD-108



PATENT NOS. #4345503. #4212223

MOUTHPIECES & ACCESSORIES

P.O. BOX 1018 • LEWISBURG ROAD • OPELOUSAS, LA. 70570
Phone (318) 948-6252 1-800-843-4078



PAUL SIMON

THE RHYTHM OF THE SAINTS—Warner Bros. 26098-2: *THE OBVIOUS CHILD; CAN'T RUN BUT; THE COAST; PROOF; FURTHER TO FLY; SHE MOVES ON; BORN AT THE RIGHT TIME; THE COOL, COOL RIVER; SPIRIT VOICES; THE RHYTHM OF THE SAINTS.* (44:42)

Personnel: Simon, guitar and vocals; Michael Brecker, sax and EWI; Felix Sabal-Lecco, Steve Gadd, drums; Vincent Nguini, J.J. Cale, Adrian Belew, Rafael Rabello, Ringo Star, Ray Phiri, Kofii Elektrik, Tommy Bilson-Ogoe, Armando Macedo, Georges Seba, Martin Atangana, guitar; Greg Phillanganes, Justin Tchounou, keyboards; Bakithi Kumalo, Armand Sabal-Lecco, Andre Manga, bass; Nana Vasconcelos, Uakti, Gordinho, Mingo Araujo, Remy Kabocka, Pedro Sorango, Francisco Aguabella, Anthony Carillo, Mazzola, Giovanni Hidalgo, Paulo Santos, Dom Chacal, Sidinho, percussion; Alan Hatot, Jude Bethel, Charles Doherty, saxes; Clifton Anderson, trombone; Randy Brecker, Hugh Masekela, Errol Ince, Clyde Mitchell, Phillippe Slominski, trumpet; Jacques Bolognesi, trombone; Dave Bergeron, euphonium; C.J. Chenier, Joao Severo da Silva, Jimmy McDonald, accordion; Milton Nascimento, voice; Kim Wilson, harmonica.

★ ★ ★ ½

The follow-up to Paul Simon's epochal *Graceland* arrives loaded with expectations the same nagging questions spurred by the first. By co-opting the sounds and idioms of exotic traditions, from Soweto to now Brazil and back, is this post-folk musician giving gainful employment and Westerners valuable exposure? Or is he, in effect, diluting—Simonizing—these ethnic strains? Sentient—and often impellingly sensuous—as these tracks are, you can't escape from the feeling that Simon often grafts himself onto these rather than weaving into the extant cultural traditions he's lifting from.

These contextual hesitations aside, Simon remains one of the best songwriters at work. He achieves a remarkable poignancy with "Born At The Right Time," juxtaposing the sweet innocence of a Third-World infant versus the squalid world about him. "Spirit Voices" is as buoyant as "Can't Run But" is pure mechanistic sound poetry. "The Obvious Child," with the percussive propulsion of Grupo Cultural Ulodom underlying Simon's mild style, has the effect of the marching band inserted as a "found sound" on Fleetwood Mac's *Tusk*, but minus the ironic content.

The second chapter in Simon's globetrotting phase is a production of epic proportions (check out the above musician credits), with luscious, seductively rhythmic results. It's just that, somehow, the sensory pleasures of the album are more persuasive than the intellec-

tual equation of the experiment. (reviewed on CD)
—Josef Woodard



CHET ATKINS/ MARK KNOPFLER

NECK AND NECK—Columbia 45307: *POOR BOY BLUES; SWEET DREAMS; THERE'LL BE SOME CHANGES MADE; JUST ONE TIME; SO SOFT, YOUR GOODBYE; YAKETY AXE; TEARS; TAHITIAN SKIES; I'LL SEE YOU IN MY DREAMS; THE NEXT TIME I'M IN TOWN.* (38:28)

Personnel: Atkins and Knopfler, guitars; Guy Fletcher, keyboards, bass, drums; Floyd Cramer, piano (cut 2); Paul Franklin, steel guitar, dobro, and pedabro; Mark O'Connor, mandolin and fiddle; Edgar Meyer, Steve Wariner, bass; Larrie Londin, drums; Vince Gill, background vocals.

★ ★ ★

When Mark Knopfler went to Nashville a few years ago to tape a Chet Atkins TV special, he was like a kid in a candy store. The next morning at our hotel, he kept talking about how amazing Atkins was, as a man, musician and producer, how much in awe he was of the gentlemanly Southerner, how much he wanted to find a way to team up with Atkins again.

This album is, I guess, the culmination of that wish. And a fine relaxed job it is. *Neck And Neck* is—ironically, given that title—about as far from a horse race as you can get. (Also somewhat ironic, given Atkins' stature as the producer who was a major architect of the Nashville Sound, is the fact that Knopfler produced their collaboration.) Instead, the feeling is warm and friendly, a couple of congenial pros swapping licks on their favorite tunes while in the background, just out of microphone range, the porch swing creaks and the whip-porwills chirp and the bugs buzz and all that jazz.

Technically and conceptually, as guitarists Atkins and Knopfler share some salient points. There's the gentle touch, the emphasis on melody and lyricism, the steelish bends and swells, the sprightly sense of swing, the overall easygoing feel. There's also the never-a-hair-out-of-place perfectionism that utterly belies the down-home ambience. For all his facility as a technician, I've only rarely been moved by a Chet Atkins performance; it's more like I appreciate how closely he skirts muzak while performing often intricate finger feats. (But who told him to sing?! UGH!) The same kind of seamless-edit calculation has become a larger part of Knopfler's work the farther away he gets from his Dire Straits days. For me, that shiny surface, which seems to reflect deeper than it reaches, cost this disc another star.

hat

— expect the unexpected

Max Roach &
Anthony Braxton
one in two,
two in one



MAX ROACH/ ANTHONY BRAXTON

ONE IN TWO • TWO IN ONE—hat ART CD 6030: *ONE IN TWO—TWO IN ONE, PART I; ONE IN TWO—TWO IN ONE, PART II.* (74:58)

Personnel: Roach, drums, percussion, gongs, tuned cymbals; Braxton, soprano, soprano, & alto saxes; clarinet; contrabass clarinet; flute.

★ ★ ★ ★

...Reading the liner note reference that *One In Two* is completely spontaneous is enough to produce a whiplash-inflicting double-take, given the cohesiveness and subtlety of Roach and Braxton's interplay in the exposition of an extremely wide range of materials. There are some exquisite sequences, such as the first movements of "Part I"—sculpted soprano bouyed on gongs and cymbal washes; groundswelling traps and alto; climactic torrential cadences accented by staccato soprano phrases—and there is plenty of jazz-informed give-and-take, such as the exhilarating call-and-response section at the end of the performance. Despite the groundbreaking nature of his collaborations with Cecil Taylor and Archie Shepp, Roach's work with Braxton is proving to be the most durable of his summits with the avant garde. —bill shoemaker

MAY 1990 DOWN BEAT 37

(reprint by permission of down beat magazine)



hat ART: A WORK IN PROGRESS

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



Australia: SONART MECA PTY LTD, KILLARA 2071 NSW / Austria: EXTRAFLATTE 1094 WIEN / France: HARMONIA MUNDI S.A. 13200 ARLÈS / Germany: HELLKON MUSIKVERLEHRS GMBH, 6800 HELDBERG / Greece: OM CENTER, ONTARIO KFSJ 628 / England: HARMONIA MUNDI UK, LONDON N1 7LR / Italy: I.R.D.s.r.l. 20152 MILANO / Portugal: MC/MUNDO DA CANÇAO, 4000 BARCELONA / Switzerland: PLAINSPIRE S.A., 1267 VICH / USA: Available at TOWER RECORDS & other specialized stores throughout the USA; Distribution: NORTH COUNTRY DISTRIBUTORS, P.O. Box 107, New York, NY 10070. Mail on CD: USA, CD 488. Hat on cassette: USA, CD 488. Hat on vinyl: USA, CD 488. Hat on cassette: JAPAN, JAZZ & NOW, WATARIGUN M.I.YAGI (Phone 062-261-6488)

The Latest in D/B Wear

**Jazz, Blues
& Beyond**

**T-Shirt in
4-color Neon.**

**Featuring
Charlie Parker,
John Lee Hooker,
and Frank Zappa.**

**Shirt is
100% Cotton (pre-shrunk)**

**Available in
White or Black.**

\$12.00 plus

\$2.00 shipping & handling.

HOT! HOT! HOT!

DOWN BEAT

Jazz, Blues & Beyond

**Embroidered Neon
Baseball Style Cap.**

In Hot Pink, Black or Lime.

\$10.00 plus

\$2.00 shipping & handling

Fill in the coupon below and mail today!



Mail to: **DOWN BEAT WEAR**, 180 W. Park Ave., Elmhurst, IL 60126

Please send _____ T-Shirt(s) at \$12.00 each.

_____ Cap(s) at \$10.00 each.

Illinois residents add 6.75% sales tax.

Add \$2.00 in all orders for shipping and handling.

Allow 4 to 6 weeks for delivery.

Payment enclosed

Charge my _____ VISA _____ MC Card No. _____

Exp. date _____ Cardholder signature _____

PLEASE PRINT

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

T-Shirt size: Medium Large Ex-Large

Color: Black White

Cap Color: Black Lime Hot Pink

(Checks drawn on U.S.A. banks only)

9102

Which isn't to denigrate *Neck And Neck*. It's a well-crafted and rewarding piece of work in that kind of deceptive Nashville way. It's user-friendly with enough musicality to keep fans happy. It'd just be more fun (and possibly more musical) if, in fact, these guys *did* cut loose with what they each know, got down and dirty and brawled a little, so that their effort lived up to its promising title more fully. As things stand, they should've called it *Hand In Hand*. (reviewed on CD)
—Gene Santoro



THE MEETING

THE MEETING—GRP 9620: *GROOVE NOW AND THEN; WALK YOUR TALK; STEPPIN' OUT; AND I THINK ABOUT IT ALL THE TIME; THE MEETING; AFRICAN FLOWER; JOYFUL NOISE; CHERRY BLOSSOM; LOWNESS; ELEMENT OF MYSTERY; VIRGIN; TANGO.* (60:02)

Personnel: Ndugu Chanler, drums, percussion; Alphonso Johnson, basses; Patrice Rushen, keyboards; Ernie Watts, saxophones.

★ ★ ★

THE MANHATTAN PROJECT

THE MANHATTAN PROJECT—Blue Note CDP 7 94204 2: *OLD WINE, NEW BOTTLES; DANIA; MICHEL'S WALTZ; STELLA BY STARLIGHT; GOODBYE PORK PIE HAT; VIRGO RISING; NEFERTITI; SUMMERTIME.* (60:54)

Personnel: Wayne Shorter, tenor and soprano saxophones; Michel Petrucciani, piano; Stanley Clarke, acoustic and electric bass; Lenny White, drums; Gil Goldstein, Pete Levin, keyboards.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

Both of these bands (supergroups, if you will) look great on paper. To differing degrees, both work. Lenny White produced the Manhattan Project, teaming up with his old Return To Forever bandmate Stanley Clarke and with saxman Wayne Shorter. Believe it or not, this disc does not disappoint. One main reason is the fine jazz drumming of White, who hasn't been heard playing much of that in recent years. Another is the very fresh pianist Michel Petrucciani, who doesn't miss any opportunity here to shine.

White's "Old Wine, New Bottles" is one of *The Manhattan Project's* best compositions. Just when I get to thinking how I like Wayne best on soprano on Jaco's "Dania," he plays a tenor solo that kills me on "Michel's Waltz." The composer has several different rhythmic notions during his solo on the waltz, always graceful and harmonic. And synthmen Gil Goldstein and Pete Levin add good color.

Stanley and Wayne take the lead on a funkified "Goodbye Pork Pie Hat," and everyone jams on it—especially Petrucciani again. Stan solos last and cooks. He's an original, and his sound and style are still all his own. (This was recorded live at Chelsea Studios in New York City before a small audience.)

"The Meeting" has been a jazz festival act for several years. Their first album together is somewhat inconsistent. Ndugu proves he can heat things up in a hurry on "Groove Now And Then." After Chancler's flourish, keyboardist Rushen takes off on an acoustic grand and flies up and down the keyboard. Ernie Watts is a Grammy winner, a proven player in many contexts. Here he's as solid a pro as ever. "Joyful Noise," a reggae-ish groove is his best compositional offering. The song "The Meeting" is a Rushen rocker that turns into a frantic trade-off thing among the four, in which subtlety is thrown out the window. It may be fun, but not really musically rewarding.

Bassist Alphonso Johnson takes a great solo on "Element Of Mystery," one of Ndugu's tunes. Ndugu's "Tango" ends the album with a bang. With Latin, funk, rock, jazz, and even rap represented here, we're getting all the varied influences from inside the band. It would be nice if on next album they did more improvising. They certainly have the talent. (reviewed on CD)

—Robin Tolleson



COTTON/WELLS/ BELL/BRANCH

HARP ATTACK!—Alligator ALCD 4790: *DOWN HOME BLUES; WHO; KEEP YOUR HANDS OUT OF MY POCKETS; LITTLE CAR BLUES; MY EYES KEEP ME IN TROUBLE; BROKE AND HUNGRY; HIT MAN; BLACK NIGHT; SOMEBODY CHANGED THE LOCK; SECOND HAND MAN; NEW KID ON THE BLOCK.* (53:59 minutes)

Personnel: James Cotton, Junior Wells, Carey Bell, Billy Branch, harmonica and vocals; Johnny B. Gayden, bass; Lucky Peterson, piano; Michael Coleman, guitar; Roy "Killer" Allison, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

LAY IT OUT

by Dan Ouellette

1990 was the year of the CD reissue, but there was none better than the thoughtfully produced re-release of the classic **Derek and the Dominos** album, *Layla*, consolidated from its double-LP package to a single CD and accompanied by a jam-sessions CD and a full CD's worth of noteworthy outtakes and alternate masters. Throw in an informative essay by DB contributor Gene Santoro on the background of the **Eric Clapton**-led sessions, package it all in an LP-sized black box with the album's unforgettable cover painting by Frandsen-De Schonberg, and you have the excellent *The Layla Sessions 20th Anniversary Edition* (Polydor 847 083-2; 4 hours, 5 minutes: ★★★★★), broken into three groups: *Layla And Other Assorted Love Songs*, *The Jams*, and *Alternate Masters*, *Jams And Outtakes*.

In producing the boxed set, the engineers digitally remixed and minimally remastered the original tapes, thus allowing for the spirit of musical spontaneity Clapton and crew—keyboardist/vocalist Bobby Whitlock, bassist Carl Radle, drummer Jim Gordon, and the late, extraordinary guitarist Duane Allman—created in the studio. The 14 *Layla* tracks of the double album are cleaner and more defined in sound quality, but were in no way compromised as to the original intention of the artists (i.e., no sampling and very little added reverb).

As for the blues-based, roots-rock songs themselves, they've held up extremely well in the two decades since their release (such gems as the rowdy "Keep On

Growing" and the rollicking "Why Does Love Got To Be So Sad" helped spawn the popularity of '70s AOR radio and continue to be staples on the FM dial). About the only thing dated in this collection is the image of a woman in bell bottoms on the hit ballad, "Bell Bottom Blues." The exquisite title cut not only features the most ecstatic guitar work of the album, but also Clapton's most passionate singing—with the possible exception being his slow, gut-wrenching reading of Freddie King's standard 12-bar blues number, "Have You Ever Loved A Woman," also in the collection.

But the inclusion of the two other CDs of jams and alternate masters is what really sets this package apart from other reissues. Taken together, the three CDs document the creative process involved in the making of *Layla*. The jams and outtakes show the band at work, experimenting with different guitar solos, using a piano in lieu of the organ, putting more punch into the rhythm section. The best view of the decision-making process is seen in the recording of the country blues number, "Mean Old World," a song that unfortunately never made it onto the original release but is offered here in a series of unedited outtakes. The band takes it through a lengthy rehearsal (complete with stops and starts and Clapton commenting, "Too fast, it's a shame"), an impressive master take with the full band, and finally a great, scaled-down guitar version (with Clapton and slide-guitar master Allman). There are also alternate takes of songs recorded before Allman joined the rehearsals that, when compared to the final master, show how integral and how underrated his guitar contributions were to *Layla*. **DB**

STEVE COLEMAN AND FIVE ELEMENTS

THIS IS RHYTHM, PEOPLE.

Jazz doesn't get more interesting than this new album from brilliant alto saxophonist Steve Coleman And Five Elements. With "Rhythm People (The Resurrection Of Creative Black Civilization)," you'll discover music that is rich, accessible, and adventurous, with fluid, funky bass lines and edgy, hot solos.



"Coleman ... has the capacity to pique the interest of the great jazz unwashed. I can hear Arsenio telling him to get busy right now," says the *Village Voice*.

On Novus/RCA Records cassettes and compact discs.



TM(s) ® Registered · Marca(s) Registrada(s)
General Electric, USA. BMG logo ® BMG Music and Novus logo
® BMG Music · © 1991 BMG Music.

From Dark, To Bright...



BG's created a revolutionary new ligature. By mounting a metal plate directly beneath a soft rubber support, BG gives you a ligature that guarantees both completely natural reed vibration and pure, unlimited sound. Experience the difference of BG ligatures on all clarinets and saxophones, incl. metal mouthpieces.

Available at fine music stores in 1 or 2 screw models.

SINAT CO. INC. SOLE U.S. IMPORTER

PAQUITO D'RIVERA MUSIC MINUS ME

BOOKLET AND TAPE SET



LATIN
JAZZ

FOR
ALL
INSTRUMENTS

SIT IN WITH PAQUITO'S
HAVANA-NEW YORK ENSEMBLE

Please send me Paquito D'Rivera Music Minus Me booklet and tape set.

U.S. \$15.00
USA & Canada

U.S. \$20.00
Foreign Countries

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Country _____

Send check or money order to:
The Havana—New York Music Co.
21—50th Street, Weehawken, NJ 07087

record & cd reviews

Alligator Records head Bruce Iglauer has this thing about summit meetings. And exclamation points. First there was 1985's *Showdown!*, a guitar gathering of Albert Collins, Robert Cray, and Johnny Copeland. Now with *Harp Attack!*, he brings together four of Chicago's finest harmonica stylists for a down-home summit that honks up a storm.

James Cotton and Junior Wells are the biggest names here but local star Carey Bell and newcomer Billy Branch hold their own. The whole gang, backed by a superb Alligator house rhythm section, kicks it off in chugging fashion with "Down Home Blues," a hit a few years back for Denise LaSalle. From there they pair off into different combinations or step forward for solo showcases, and the sparks begin to fly. Billy and Junior mix it up on the Wells' original, "Broke And Hungry," propelled by Johnny B. Gayden's ultra-funky staccato basslines. The three elders deal a raunchy rendition of "My Eyes Keep Me In Trouble," sharing street banter about big-legged women before taking up their harps in hand.

Junior Wells sets a South Side Chicago blues club ambiance with his earthy reading of Sonny Boy Williamson's "Keep Your Hands," and he rekindles some "Messin' With The Kid" energy on "Somebody Changed The Lock." Cotton steps forward for a mournful "Black Night" and newcomer Branch pays tribute to his elders on the session with "New Kid On The Block," an autobiographical number in which he recalls being a youngblood standing in awe of those mighty harp stars.

Dedicated to the four men who virtually invented modern blues harmonica (Sonny Boy Williamson I, Sonny Boy Williamson II, Little Walter Jacobs, and Big Walter Horton), *Harp Attack!* is a must for fans of that distorted sound of harmonica blown through a hand-held mic and blasted through an amplifier. It's the Chicago sound, and this is the cream of that crop. (reviewed on CD) —*Bill Milkowski*

ABRACADABRA—Soul Note LP 121 201-1:
HIP SLICK; MR. ADAM; TANGO DREAM; MR. JOHN; ABRACADABRA; THE UNKNOWN KNOWN; MR. DAVE; GIRL SWIRL.

Personnel: Jeff Palmer, Hammond B3 electronic organ; David Liebman, soprano saxophone; John Abercrombie, guitar synthesizer; Adam Nussbaum, drums.

★ ★ ★

Soprano sax specialist Liebman and pianist Beirach are as empathetic and interactive a pairing as you're likely to encounter—not surprising, as they've been duetting for nearly two decades. On *Chant*, they explore modes of music-making borrowed from both jazz and contemporary classical—thematic improvisation, notation (including tone-rows), call-and-response, atmospheric tone painting, a variety of rhythmic devices—and sound comfortable and creative doing so. Liebman alternates between serpentine and severe phrasing, and to his credit avoids the influences of Coltrane and Lacy. In other settings Beirach's piano playing can be too plush and cushiony for my taste, but here he's at his best: sparse, focused, making every note count.

Despite the titles, there's no New Age noodling to be heard; understated, lyrical, sometimes rhapsodic, sometimes melancholic, the music displays the duo's sensitivity to nuance and subtle give-and-take. Unnecessary echo and harmonizer effects may momentarily threaten to swamp their concentration of mood and material, but are used judiciously elsewhere. All told, you won't find a lot of fireworks here, but such considered, sincere, contemplative work should not be underestimated. (reviewed on CD)

Recorded in '87, Liebman's agitated flurries on *Abacadabra* resort back to his days as a bubble in one of Miles' early '70s churning cauldrons. Unfortunately, this co-op quartet is neither as high-energy nor ambitiously weird. Palmer, his powerful instrument notwithstanding, never quite lets all the stops out. And I prefer Abercrombie on guitars of the non-synth'ed variety; here he mimics vibes and keyboards, but frequently just sounds whiney. The tunes, primarily Palmer's, can be evocative ("Tango Dream" is a breath of musty, floral hot-house air, and the title tune weaves individual contributions dizzily) but lack a firm compositional hand; often things float along aimlessly. The album has its moments, but they are few and far between. (reviewed on LP)—*Art Lange*

LIEBMAN · BEIRACH

CHANT

音

DAVID LIEBMAN/ RICHARD BEIRACH

CHANT—CMP CD 40: *INCANTATION; INVOCATION.* (57:18 minutes)

Personnel: Liebman, soprano saxophone; Beirach, piano.

★ ★ ★ ★

PALMER/LIEBMAN/ ABERCROMBIE/ NUSSBAUM

THE STORY OF
**LESTER
YOUNG**



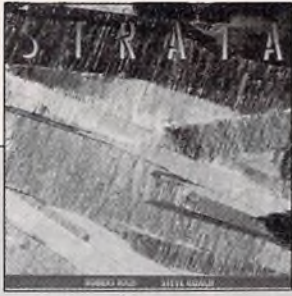
"5 Stars"
—Leonard Feather

"...in a word, superb."
—Jazziz

"...masterful production..."
—Jazz Times

Song of the Spirit
P.O. Box 444
Willemie MN 55090

Price: 74.95 (Includes postage and handling)
Includes: 2 hour Videotape, Transcript of tape



**STEVE ROACH/
ROBERT RICH**

STRATA—Hearts of Space 11019-2: *FEARLESS; MICA; FOREVER; THE GROTTO OF TIME LOST; IGUANA; MAGMA; PERSISTENCE OF MEMORY (FOR DALI); REMEMBRANCE; CEREMONY OF SHADOWS; LA LUNA.* (59:07)

Personnel: Roach, analog and digital synthesizers, sequencers, samplers, glurp; Rich, synthesizers and samplers, percussion, steel guitar, bamboo flutes, tape hiss, glurp.

★ ★ ★ ★

**ROACH/HUDSON/
HOPKINS**

THE SOUND OF THE EARTH—Fortuna 17071-2: *RED DUST AND SWEAT; CALL TO KURANDA; THE ANCIENT VOICE; ATMOSPHERE FOR DREAMING; DARK-TIME/THE INITIATION; ORIGIN; SPIRITS; THE HUNTER; AWAKENING EARTH; LAND SOUND/THE DREAMING PLACE.* (62:53)

Personnel: Steve Roach, clicking sticks, didjeridu, analog and digital synthesizers; David Hudson, didjeridu; Sarah Hopkins, spirit catcher, cello, voice.

★ ★ ★

A lot has happened since Henry Mancini visited Africa in 1963 and wrote the catchy little "Baby Elephant Walk" for the movie soundtrack to *Hatari!* The world of music has grown to include the likes of synthesist Steve Roach. Both are Western musicians, and yet, unlike Mancini and his times, Roach has been relatively transformed by the new environments he's inhabited, in this case, most of the Australian continent. A soundtrack recording to *Outback!* it ain't, but Roach dives in headfirst, nonetheless, on *Sound Of The Earth*, with music composed for the North Australian didjeridu, an Aboriginal wind instrument which is "little more than a hollowed out tree branch" (and can sound like a buzzing bee or a jew's harpist on speed). Sharing compositional credits with Sarah Hopkins and David Hudson, Roach continues his work as a collaborator (as on *Strata*).

It's difficult to assess his success on *Sounds*, partly given that the acoustic didjeridu (primarily Hudson's ax) takes center stage and playing credits must be inferred from composer credits. If so, Roach plays a pretty mean didjeridu on "Darktime." Featured native Hudson's playing is excellent if uniform, providing a mesmerizing drone throughout. On voice, cello, and "spirit catcher" (a contemporary, wooden "shamanistic musical instrument which acts as a receptor for unseen spirits"), Hopkins complements in a similarly evocative fashion: her sustained arco cello almost seems

to mimic the didjeridu on "Awakening Earth." Roach's electronics are used sparingly, making *Sound* a noticeably different outing for him. To this reviewer, Roach's 1988 *Dreamtime Return* (his initial venture into the mythological world of the Aborigines, the "idyllic period of the primeval Dreamtime"; Fortuna 18055-2) is more engaging and suggestive of its title. Best cut here: "Red Dust And Sweat," with the Darwin Didjeridu Mob. Whoa.

Strata, with fellow synthesist Robert Rich, is a return to more "conventional" territory. Not one to slouch on percussive effects, Roach continues his patterns of drumming amidst minimalist and/or swirling synthetic lines and structures. This is serious, important instrumental music, certainly worthy of "deep listening" and not of a kind normally associated with new-age schmaltz and its attendant addictions to vacuous melodic and rhythmic constructions. With Rich, he has found yet another co-conspirator attempting to discover new musical ground.

"The Grotto Of Time Lost" follows three relatively busy, drum-oriented pieces of medium tempos. "Grotto" suggests not only a lost time, but much of Roach's dreamy, pared-down synthesizer work of years past. A music with no apparent beginning, middle, or end, "Grotto"'s lush ambience leads nicely into the soft, rhythmic textures of "Iguana": an apparent melding of the opening percussive trilogy with "Grotto"'s open-ended, subtle lustre. Earthy and ethereal, "Iguana" represents well his penchant for throbbing beats laced with minimalist textures.

In a genre laden with hacks devoid of originality and freshness, Steve Roach's deceptive simplicity nails the real thing. (reviewed on CD)
—John Ephland

cate balance of egos, the marquee ordering, and the division of credit can be nagging hobgoblins. An embarrassment of riches crops up when Bob Dylan, Tom Petty, George Harrison, Jeff Lynne (and, in the beginning, the late Roy Orbison) get together. What to do? Make up a brand new composite identity. Now, the Traveling Wilburys are the most legendary nonexistent brothers in show biz.

If the Wilburys ever began as a party gag, the musical upshot was impressive from the git go. *Volume 3* (no, Virginia, there isn't a *Volume 2*) is an assured and only occasionally wacky work of unpretentious pop music, a loose-knit composite of the voices going into the mix. Trickery aside, this is one crack unit. On "Inside Out," the Wilburys upend rock clichés as they sing "Don't it make you want to twist and shout when you're inside out?" while a piano snakes chromatically between the lyric lines. Spike/George breaks out the trusty old sitar for a melodic solo turn on "The Devil's Been Busy," and elsewhere mans his oblique slide guitar. The trademarked production acumen of Clayton/Jeff is in evidence at every turn, but not to the point of stripping the project of its brawling, unfussy knit. Doowopping 6/8 feeds the groove of "7 Deadly Sins," and the sentimental value of musical gear is the subject of the lanky "Cool Dry Place."

The gag is carried to an almost obsessive degree. In tiny typeface printed on the CD pullout is the message: "BEWARE: Pirated records, CD's and tapes damage your equipment. Buy only genuine Wilbury records." Ha! What do they take us for? The only thing genuine about the Traveling Wilburys is the genuine solidity of the music. (reviewed on CD)
—Josef Woodard



TRAVELING WILBURYS

VOLUME 3—Wilbury/Warner Bros. 26324-2: *SHE'S MY BABY; INSIDE OUT; IF YOU BELONGED TO ME; THE DEVIL'S BEEN BUSY; 7 DEADLY SINS; POOR HOUSE; WHERE WERE YOU LAST NIGHT; COOL DRY PLACE; NEW BLUE MOON; YOU TOOK MY BREATH AWAY; WILBURY TWIST.* (36:12)

Personnel: Spike Wilbury, electric and acoustic guitars, sitar, mandolin, vocals; Muddy Wilbury, acoustic guitar, vocals; Boo Wilbury, acoustic guitar, vocals, harmonica; Clayton Wilbury, acoustic guitar, bass, keyboard, vocals; Jim Keltner, drums; Roy Cooper, percussion; Jim Horn, saxes; Gary Moore, guitar solo (cut 1).

★ ★ ★ ★

All-star confabs—in pop music more than in jazz—have their inherent problems. The deli-



ROBIN HOLCOMB

ROBIN HOLCOMB—Elektra 60983-2: *NINE LIVES; THE AMERICAN RHINE; ELECTRICAL STORM; TROY; SO STRAIGHT AND SLOW; HAND ME DOWN ALL STORIES; THIS POEM IS IN MEMORY OF I; YR MOTHER CALLED THEM FARMHOUSES; WALTZ; DELIVER ME.* (42:26)

Personnel: Holcomb, piano, vocals; Doug Weiselman, clarinet, tenor sax, electric and acoustic guitars; Dave Hofstra, electric and acoustic bass, tuba; Danny Frankel, drums, percussion; Wayne Horvitz, organ, synthesizer, piano, harmonica; Bill Frisell, electric and acoustic guitars; John Caulfield, violin and mandolin (cuts 4, 8); Nica, sings and tells stories (6).

★ ★ ★ ★ 1/2

Robin Holcomb has been doing her infectious, quirky dance on the outskirts of folk and pop

songcraft for some years now—a songstress just outside of earshot, in the new-music world. With her first major-label domestic release, Holcomb proves deft in conjuring up imagery and provoking new musical thought. This is a considerable piece of work, chock full of subtle pleasures, musical adventurism, and dream-like evocations of both note and word.

Holcomb's understated vocal approach is graced with a quivering vibrato that suggests a cross between Victoria Williams and Leonard Cohen. She's in very good company: keyboardist/husband Wayne Horvitz has essentially gathered the makings of his own band—the President, including the multi-tooled Doug Weiselman—to flesh out Holcomb's intriguing compositions.

Holcomb's songs register associations with American musical traditions, old and new. The main section of "Troy" nods toward The Band—of "Cripple Creek"'s clackety backwoods funk. The odd chord pattern in "Hand Me Down All Stories" is a lopsided spiral that subverts the expected II-V-I chord progression. On "So Straight And Slow," the melody spills lazily, bitonally, from a piano ostinato-driven A section to a B section and back. Shades (and shards) of "Blue Monk" thread through "this poem is in memory of!" "Deliver Me" closes the set on a languid, hymn-like note.

Mostly, this album embodies a new fix on the art of the folk song. Never content to settle into harmonic or structural conventions, Holcomb seems to stake out a new conceptual claim with each piece. Such a rich vein of new ideas is downright ear-opening, and mind-expanding. (reviewed on CD) —*Josef Woodard*



ED MANN

PERFECT WORLD—CMP CD 45: *LONO; WHY; THE OTHER WAY; PATTERN MOD (YOUR KARMIC MONITOR SPEAKING); ONE OF US; WORKING FOR CHANGE; WALKING IN BALANCE; URBAN LEADER; THE BIGG.* (46:46)

Personnel: Mann, *percussion, mallets, and electronics*; Doug Lunn, *bass*; Mike Hofman, *guitar, guitar synth*; Chad Wackerman, *drums*; Kyle Mann, *harmonica, vocal*; Vida Vierra, *Xander, vocals*; Bruce Fowler, *trombone*; Walt Fowler, *trumpet, flugelhorn*; Phil Teele, *bass trombone*; Suzette Moriarty, *french horn*.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

Ed Mann is in the vanguard of electronic mallet percussion with the Silicon Mallet. But more than that, this album proves he's a writer and performer (on all kinds of mallet percussion) to contend with. This progressive music comes at you from many angles, but ends up feeling

VINCE

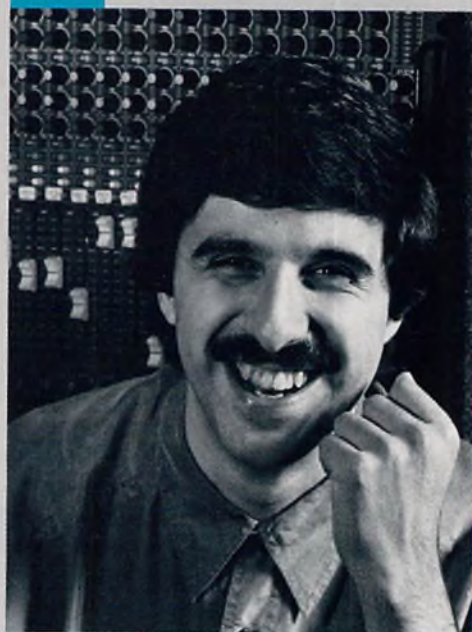
featuring:

John Scofield
Ralph Towner
Peter Erskine
Bob Mintzer
Joe Lovano
Will Lee
Gary Peacock
Jim Beard

MENDOZA

START HERE

Composer/arranger VINCE MENDOZA's name may not be familiar to you, but if you've heard recent releases by GARY BURTON, JOHN ABERCROMBIE and MICHAEL BRECKER you have heard his work. VINCE's strikingly original compositions are heralded by musicians and critics alike as innovative, hip and seductively lyrical.



For a free catalog write to
True Blue Music, Dept DB, 35 Melrose Place, Stamford, CT 06902
© 1990 Capitol Records, Inc.

B2/B4-94592

like a unified statement. It's full of "ear candy," but the sounds all seem to be there for a reason. It has a musical and lyrical spacey sense of humor that can certainly be described as Zappa-esque, and that's not surprising considering Mann's years with FZ.

Perfect World is largely vocal, a fact which will turn off a lot of people. I'm usually disappointed with vocals on a fusion album myself, but the arrangements here (and performances) are integral to the music, and as tasty and energetic as an album by David Sancious and Tone called *True Colors* (Arista 4201).

The music isn't as lick-oriented as some of Zappa's. It's as funky as Sheila E. But with quite a bit more substance. Mann obviously keeps up to date with the music on the streets. Musical nods to Prince are evident on *Perfect*

World. "Why" is a funky rap, featuring animated vocalist Vida Vierra and the awesome (also former Zappa) drummer Chad Wackerman. The leader proves his arranging skills here, and plays wonderful marimba under and around the action. Mike Hofman is a cross between Fripp and Holdsworth on guitar, with a nice funky rhythmic hand, too. "The Other Way" is a beautifully recorded, lush, mysterious, slow 13/8 vamp. The Fowler Brothers get some good musical environments to solo over, particularly on "Urban Leader."

The lyrics aren't two-sentence love, throw-away lines, but actual songs about important issues ("Why doesn't Little Richard have a Star or Grammy?," "Working For Change" in the world.) The quality is too high for the pop market, and the jazzers may not dig the sing-

ing, but Mann's emerging talents are undeniable. (reviewed on CD) —Robin Tolleson



DAVID TORN

DOOR X—Windham Hill 1096: *TIME BOMB; LION OF BOAZ; VOODOO CHILE; THE OTHERS; DIAMOND MANSIONS; GOOD MORNING, MR. WONDERFUL; BRAVE LIGHT OF SUN; PROMISE; TASTE OF ROSES; DOOR X.* (49:02)

Personnel: Torn, guitars, vocals, hypnodrones, vocals, keyboards, drums, percussion, tablas, organ, bass; Antony Widoff, piano (cuts 1,4,6,7), keyboards (2,3), percussion (3,8), drums (10), clarinet (3), trumpet (8), vocals (8); Bill Bruford, drums (2,3,8), percussion (7); Gary Burke, drums (4,6); Kurt Wortman, percussion (1), snares (9), pot drum and shakers (10); Geoffrey Gordon, percussion (4,5,9), drums (9); Mick Karn, bass (2,3,8,9), bass clarinet (7), percussion (3); Chris Botti, trumpet (4), hypnodrone (4); Doug Lunn, bass (6,10); Vida Vierra, vocals (1,8).

★ ★ ★ ★

It takes courage for a guitarist to take on a Hendrix tune and make it his own. A guitar whiz in his own right, David Torn (session man for such artists as Don Cherry, Jan Garbarek, and Mark Isham) has done just that, setting "Voodoo Chile" ablaze with guitar licks as jagged as lightning and as cascading as meteor showers. The piece is appropriately turbulent thanks to pattering percussion and ex-King Crimson-er, ex-Yes-man Bill Bruford's aggressive drumming. And Torn has thrown his own haiku-like lyrics into the mix. Plus, when he sings, "I'm gonna move like a snake and speak like a lion," Torn aptly describes the range of moods he explores on the rest of the album. His axes snarl and wail, but he also coaxes them to quietly slither through the underbrush.

Torn begins *Door X* adventurously with swirling riffs and stinging guitar jabs on the catchy, rock-inflected melody, "Time Bomb," and continues to experiment with fancy guitar effects, slashing harsh strokes of vivid colors through pastel washes, such as on "Lion Of Boaz," an atmospheric instrumental. On "The Others," his guitar pierces like a siren as well as converses in an exotic tone that sounds like a psychedelic oboe. However, midway through the collection, the compositions get too ethereal. Even though Torn still dazzles with his striking solos, "Diamond Mansions" and "Brave Light Of Sun" fall flat because they are so steeped in a musical impressionism. Yet the collection ends strongly with highlight numbers: "Promise" (percolating rhythms of Bruford and bassist Mick Karn, and Torn's guitar

NEW SUGAL MOUTHPIECES



Utilizing the Artistic Craftsmanship of European Master Model Makers and Sophisticated Computer Technology, here is a Totally New, Metal Saxophone Mouthpiece.

SUGAL MOUTHPIECES have been designed to aerodynamically embrace the contour of the embouchure. A "Duck Bill" tip rail opening, and a baffle with precision cut "Mini-Tracks", allows for a brilliant, full centered liquid tone, of amazing edge and resonance...

SUGAL MOUTHPIECES are available plated in Sterling Silver or 18 Karat Gold. An Optional

Built-On Precision-Machined Ligature with 3 Interchangeable Tone Plates firmly positions the reed, allowing selective alterations of timbre.

♪ "Remarkably far superior than any other mouthpiece I've ever played..." - Jerry Bergonzi

Listen to Jerry Bergonzi's great sound on his recent Joey Calderazzo recording *In The Door* with two other world-leading tenor players.

♪ "Finally, a mouthpiece made the way a mouthpiece should be made- absolutely tremendous" - Joe Viola, Berklee College of Music

♪ "It's fast and clear- moves like a bullet, best I ever felt on Tenor!" - Fred Lipsius- Arranger, composer, original saxophonist with Blood Sweat and Tears

♪ "You really have an incredible full, well rounded sounding mouthpiece..." - Billy Pierce, Recording Artist with Sunnyside Records

♪ "Sound was resonating and free-blowing. Technique was effortless..." - Ed Tomassi, Assistant Professor at Berklee College of Music

Please Call or Write to:

GARY
SUGAL
USA

MOUTHPIECES, INC.

99 South Street • Providence, RI 02903
(401) 751-2501 • Fax: (401) 751-2604

riffs that sound like curled metal shavings) and the title tune that features a gutsy rock melody and Torn's ecstatic soloing.

Torn doesn't play clichés, nor does he go the showy route with his unusual guitar experimen-

tations, thus giving his pieces a driving intensity as well as a soulful introspection. Only thing missing from Torn's impressive Windham Hill debut is a Frisell-like sense of humor. (reviewed on CD)
—Dan Ouellette

RAHSAAN TO THE MOON

by Gene Santoro

If **Rahsaan Roland Kirk** hadn't existed, somebody would've had to invent him. As it is, he invented himself. Not coincidentally, he invented a couple of instruments—the mandello, which he adapted from the B-flat soprano sax, and the stritch, from the E-flat alto; resurrected the Dixieland notion of ensemble improvising; brought circular breathing into jazz; took the vaudeville stunt of playing multiple horns and made it into a musical statement; and ignored labels like Dixieland and bebop and free by playing right across them. A trickster who often cloaked his mind-bending insights within jokes, which brought him derisory reactions from solemn types, Kirk drew more out of music history—not just jazz history—than most other folks hear, let alone use.

The Complete Mercury Recordings Of Roland Kirk (Mercury 846 630-2; 9 hours, 28 minutes: ★★★★★) is a 10-CD compilation (plus a bonus CD of "A Stritch In Time," recorded live by Kirk's quartet at the 1962 Newport Jazz Festival). It's been lovingly assembled and digitally remastered to a fine clarity by producer Kyoshi "Boxman" Koyama. (Why is it, several years post-CD, that so much well-thought-out stuff still comes out of Japan and not here? And extra kudos to PolyGram for casing the set once again in a CD-sized box; I'm tired of having to shelve CD compilations in with my LPs.) The set collects the master multi-instrumentalist's sides for Mercury, Limelight, and Smash during the 1961-'65 period.

As Dan Morgenstern explains in his excellent notes, this was "Roland in his straight-ahead prime." But in Kirk's case, straightahead meant a room without walls. His conceptual leaps reach back to Tchaikovsky and Sidney Bechet and Hindemith while zigzagging through the likes of Lester Young, Don Byas, Kurt Weill, Bunny Berigan, Villa Lobos, Charlie Parker, John Lewis, Clifford Brown, John Coltrane, and Barbra Streisand. (The cover of "People" on disc 8 is fascinating and hilarious by turns, finishing up with a characteristically ironic quote from *The Wizard Of Oz's* "If I Only Had A Heart.")

The settings are as varied as the material. Various quartet and combo dates weave in and out of sessions with the Quincy Jones Orchestra; the personnel listing is peppered with names like Art Davis, Hank Jones, Wynton Kelly, Roy Haynes, Tubby Hayes, Walter Bishop Jr., Louis Hayes, Andrew Hill, Clark Terry, Phil Woods, Jim Hall, Virgil Jones, Richard Davis, James Moody, Harold Mabern, Gary Burton, Major Holley, Benny

Golson, Dizzy Gillespie, Jaki Byard, Elvin Jones. If you didn't have a clue about Kirk's deft musical adroitness, just a quick flip through that lineup should tell you.

But broad-ranging as he was in stylistic terms, Rahsaan was no session-sprinting chameleon. Everything he played came out him—odd and gyrating turns of phrase, sudden explosions of his one-man horn section, flute-and-vocal conversations, reed squeaks, overblowings, growls and vocal outbursts à la Mingus. For to come out "him" meant entertaining as well as provoking. Brilliant and out there as he often was, he wanted to convince his audiences to come along for the ride without compromising either his vision or their need to enjoy what they heard. So cuckoo clocks and windup music boxes—shades of the AACM—made regular cameo appearances on his discs. More often than not, they helped him get to his listeners, then take them somewhere they didn't expect. The serious folks who grouched about his alleged buffoonery never got it.

Maybe that was because, no matter how deep his love and knowledge of the past—and he had few rivals in either—he didn't want to simply resuscitate it. No Roland Kirk performance is reducible to a history seminar. In his playing, his compositions, and his arrangements, he bent what he gleaned from it to his time and his needs, updated it, tinkered with it, made it his own while proudly pointing to its genesis. He didn't see history through Reaganesque rose-colored glasses; he heard it, flaws and triumphs alike, through the voracious ears of a musician alive to every possibility he could plug into. *The Complete Mercury Recordings* is an incredible panorama of some ways he did that, and worth its price for that alone, since Kirk remains one of the most undervalued and pivotal figures in a field with more than its fair share of the underappreciated.

Although the terrific Atlantic reissues like *The Inflated Tear* capture Kirk at his conceptual peak, anyone who wants to fill Kirk's extremely broad musical picture in around the edges has plenty of options to consider. Take *Kirk's Work* (Prestige 7210; 33:25: ★★). Pitting the slippery multi-instrumentalist (often as a one-man horn section) against an organ trio powered by Jack McDuff, this disc isn't the best place to meet Kirk for the first time, but it does offer an unusual perspective on him. Then there's *Rahsaan Roland Kirk & His Vibration Society Paris-1976* (Jeal RJD 510; 50:04: ★★½). This is post-paralysis, one-handed Kirk, and it marks his triumph of spirit. Matching wits with Steve Turre and Hilton Ruiz, he plays and sings with such humor and charm on this mostly bop-oriented date that his handicap diminishes. Thirteen months later, he was dead.

DB

hat

— expect the unexpected

GRAWE/REIJSEGER/HEMINGWAY

SONIC FICTION

hat ART 6043 CD

Alien Corn I, II, III; Fibulation; Aspects Of Sombnambulism/Demure Scuttle; Aspects Of Sombnambulism/Sleepwaltzer; Fangled Talk; Masting; Georg Grawe (p); Ernst Reijseger (clo); Gerry Hemingway (d, perc). Rec: 14 March 1989.

SWITZERLAND WAS the accidental birthplace of Dada, a convenient geographical compromise between France, Germany, Romania, Holland, and the USA. The sensibility that informs *Sonic Fiction*, from the Swiss hat Art label, has something of the same inspired contingency, three players of markedly different temperament, united by an (apparently) unconscious antagonism to the fixed resolutions of both "jazz" and "New Music", content with their rocking horse, affirmative, unprogrammatically and surprisingly exact in execution.

If "Aspects Of Sombnambulism" as a title sounds disconcertingly like a Surrealist manifesto, its impact is all about precision, about knowing exactly where to put your feet in the dark of the sleep of reason. Which is some kind of sufficiency for effective improvised music. Grawe, Reijseger and Hemingway sound as if they have been rehearsing these pieces for years. There is an exactness to "Demure Scuttle" and a sweetness to "Sleepwaltzer" that seems almost unfeasible. Hemingway in particular is able to catch the harmonic structure building between his colleagues and turn it into a signal-sharp Morse far removed from the contentless twittering of most "improvising" percussionists. Like Eddie Prevost, he is able to swing even when playing completely free and his range of articulation is quite extraordinary.

The long "Fangled Talk" is slightly disappointing, a solitary lapse into what is usually called self-indulgence, but which is more likely to be simple lapse of attention. Grawe, one of the most enterprising of the post-Schlippenbach players, is apt to dissolve his own most acute observations in a sublimar of repetition and avoidance. Reijseger, by contrast, knows how to enjoy an idea and when to dispense with it. The three parts of "Alien Corn" (the reference to Ruth, if that's what it is, escapes me) form a delicate suite; Hemingway's brushes, four-inch whitewash jobs by the sound of it, swirl sensuously and the cellist plays relatively straight against Grawe's meditative exploration. "Fibulation" pushes Reijseger out a bit, tale-spinning, fibrillating wildly as the cardiac rhythm goes haywire. The final "Masting" is equally remarkable.

In sum, and in parts, an extraordinary set, delivering far more from the pianist than recent work with the Gruben Klang Orkester or the earlier hat *Art Songs And Variations*, and substantially confirming Gerry Hemingway's stature as a percussionist of the highest rank.

BRIAN MORTON

(reprint by permission of *wire* magazine)

hat ART: A WORK IN PROGRESS

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



Australia: SONART MECA PTY LTD, KILLARA, 2071 NSW / Austria: EXTRAPLATTE, 1094 WIEN / Benelux: HARMONIA MUNDI, NL-2892 CK DEN HAAG / Canada: SCANDINAVIAN RECORD IMPORT LTD, PETERBOROUGH, ONTARIO K9J 6Z8 / England: HARMONIA MUNDI UK, LONDON N1 7LR / France: HARMONIA MUNDI SA, 13800 ARLES / Germany: HELIKON MUSIKVERTRIEB GMBH, 6900 HEIDELBERG / Greece: OM CENTER, 11636 ATHENS / Japan: CROWN RECORD CO LTD, TOKYO 107 / Italy: LR.D&L, 20132 MILANO / Portugal: MC/CANCAO, 4 000 PORTO / Spain: HARMONIA MUNDI-IBERICA, 08970 BARCELONA / Switzerland: PLAINISPHARE SA, 1267 VICH / USA: Available at TOWER RECORDS & other specialized stores throughout the USA; Distribution: NORTH COUNTRY DISTRIBUTORS, Redwood N.Y. 13679; Mail order: USA: CADENCE, Redwood N.Y. 13679 (Phone 315-287-2862) / Mail order: EUROPE: JAZZCOCK, BEHAIMSTR. 4, 1000 BERLIN (W) 10. (Phone 030-341-5447) / Mail order: JAPAN: jazz & NOW, WATARIGUN MIYAGI (Phone 022-261-6488)

1 TEXAS TORNADOS.

"Adios, Mexico" (from *TEXAS*

TORNADOS, Warner Bros.) Doug Sahn, lead vocals; Louis Ortega, background vocals; Augie Meyers, Vox organ/accordion; Mike Buck, drums; Richard Bennett, electric guitar; Speedy Sparks, bass.

That has to be Augie Meyers, Flaco [Jimenez], and Doug Sahn. It sounded like them. They're great. I could listen to that all day long. More power to the homeboys. You can give them 4 stars. Everybody gets a star. They're beautiful musicians. It's refreshing to hear guys sitting around playing. It's the polar opposite of what's going on today in the micro-waveable music industry.

2 LOUIS ARMSTRONG.

"Satchel Mouth Swing" (1938)

(from *THE BEST OF THE DECCA YEARS, VOL. 2*, MCA) Armstrong, trumpet and vocal; plus 14-piece band.

He's probably the finest musician of this century, I would guess. There was such joy. That's what music is supposed to be about: there was freedom and joy and everything everybody talks about. Expression. At the end, when he picks up the trumpet for a solo, you can hear every musician in the band suddenly realize that they're playing with Louis Armstrong and just dig in. You don't hear much of that anywhere today, very little of that flight. These days, everything is too conscious.

I love Louis Armstrong a lot. I look to him as representing everything that's good about music. He gets the most stars of anybody: 5 very big ones.

3 RICHARD THOMPSON.

"Tear-Stained Letter" (from *HAND OF*

KINDNESS, Hannibal) Thompson, guitar and vocal; Simon Nichol, guitar; Dave Pegg, bass; Dave Mattocks, drums; Pete Thomas, saxophone; John Kirkpatrick, accordion.

Richard's a wonderful, wonderful musician. On that solo, he just starts worrying that damn guitar. You know how they say a dog worries a bone? It's like Lonnie Mack. He's one of the most powerful musicians I've had the chance to work with, and very dry and witty. I've heard "Tear-Stained Letter" and I've also heard Joel Sonnier do it. This was the album after *Shoot Out The Lights*, which was a landmark album. 4 stars.

4 THE SHAGGS. "Philosophy Of The World" (from *PHILOSOPHY OF THE WORLD, Rounder*) Betty, Helen, and Dorothy Wiggins, guitar, drums, vocals.

My comments are: First of all, it's altogether too philosophical. And if somebody's going to be that philosophical, then you should be able to hear what they're saying. If Hegel

T BONE BURNETT

by Josef Woodard

T Bone Burnett is one tall drink of water, an artist/producer/guitarist/raconteur/nice guy with a resume that casts a long shadow over the pop music landscape. Presently one of the most sought-after producers making records, Burnett has worked with Elvis Costello, Los Lobos, the BoDeans, Marshall Crenshaw, Sam Phillips (now his wife), Leo Kottke, and many others, and is renowned for his twin passions: American musical roots and gamey studio experimentation.

Born in 1948 in St. Louis, Burnett grew up in Fort Worth, Texas, and began producing regional Texan acts. In 1975, he shot into a wider arena as part of Bob Dylan's legendary medicine show, the Rolling Thunder Revue. Burnett's solo projects include *Truth Decay* (Ta-



DEBORAH FEINGOLD

koma 72780) and *The Talking Animals* (Columbia 40792).

For his first blindfold test, Burnett sat in the lounge of Ocean Way studio in Hollywood, where he was putting the finishing touches on a new album by Sam Phillips, who sat in on the test.

had been that indistinct, we never would have had the Third Reich. Also, they can't play, they can't sing, and they can't write. And lastly, I prefer it to 95 percent of the nonsense that's out these days [laughter]. Give 'em 4 stars.

I must say, that's one of the most outrageous grooves I've ever heard. It sounded like three people in different rooms.

5 NRBQ. "Whistle While You Work" (from *STAY AWAKE*, A&M) Joey Spampinato, bass and vocal; Tom Bortolino, drums; Terry Adams, keyboards; Al Anderson, guitar.

They're probably the best American rock & roll band, night in and night out. . . . I hope they go on forever, do it for another 20 years. Like Ronnie Hawkins used to say, "If I don't make it by the time I'm 60, I'm going to look for another line of work." NRBQ is a national treasure. 4 stars.

6 FLOYD TILMAN. "Drivin' Nails In My Coffin" (1946) (from *FLOYD TILMAN, Columbia Historic Edition*) Tilman, rhythm guitar and vocal; others.

That's good driving music. No pun intended. Who is that?

JW: Floyd Tilman.

TB: Floyd Tilman. Oh, really? I've heard of him all my life, but I've never heard him. It's pretty music. I'd like to hear more of Floyd Tilman. I think he's from Texas, too. He sings a little bit sharp all the time—[sings] "I'm walkin' the floor over you-oo." It's kind of beautiful, very distinct: 4 stars.

The farther along things get into perfect-

ness in the music business—everything's in perfect time and perfect pitch—the more one begins to appreciate the idiosyncracies of tonality, intonation, and time. I don't know if it will ever be accepted again, because people have become accustomed to the perfection and the special effects-ness.

I guess U2 and REM are examples of bands who sing out of tune and play all over the place—like the Rolling Stones. And Floyd Tilman.

7 BEACH BOYS. "Don't Talk, Put Your Head On My Shoulder" (from *PET SOUNDS*, Capitol) Brian Wilson, composer, production, vocals.

This was recorded in Studio Three across the hall there. That's *Pet Sounds*. People always refer to *Pet Sounds*, but I don't know if anybody really appreciates it. It's disappeared.

People are trying to get those atmospherics that Brian Wilson did with an organ, a few string players, a bass, a cymbal, and voices. People are trying to do that all the time with synthesizers, but you can't come anywhere close to that, because it's about overtones and all the things that fight each other to become something else.

It's an absolutely gorgeous piece of music from a beautiful record. I listened to this record a lot while preparing to work on Sam's record, because it's so adventurous sonically, and without the facility and ease of synthesizers. It's fought over a bit. He ground it out and you can feel the struggle. That gets ½ star less than Louis Armstrong, who gets the most stars. DB