

Dave Brubeck — Maceo Parker — Wallace Roney

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Jazz, Blues & Beyond

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Lou Reed

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Dave Brubeck

TERI BLOOM



Maceo Parker

HYOU VIELZ



Wallace Roney

MITCHELL SEIDEL

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DOWN BEAT

Jazz, Blues & Beyond

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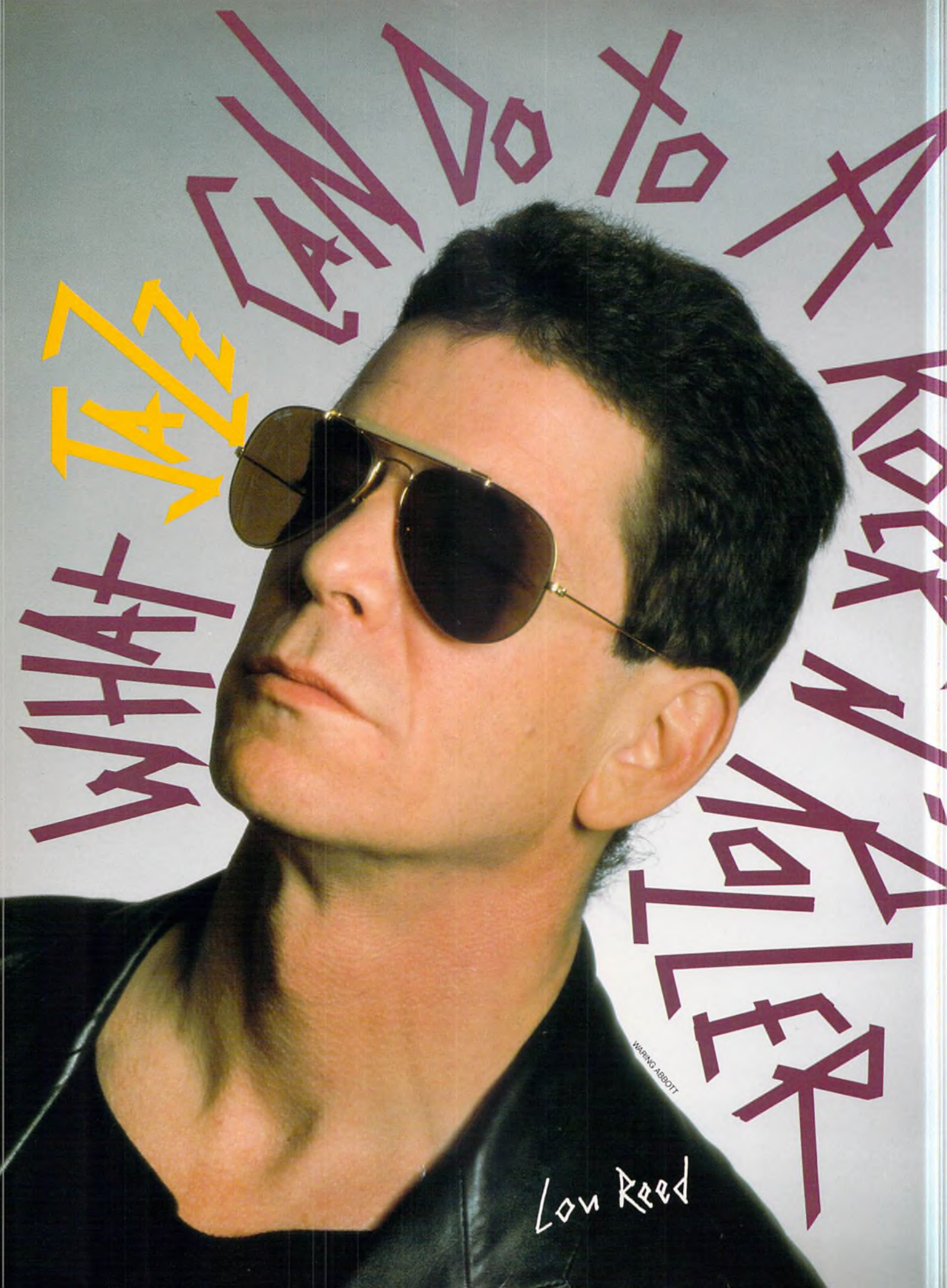
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WHAT TALENT CAN DO TO ROCK

TOY

LOW PRED

WARRING ABBOTT

By Gene Santoro

It's been 25 years since the Velvet Underground began. When Andy Warhol picked them up for the Exploding Plastic Inevitable, his light-and-film mindf**k, and produced their first album with his banana cover, their artsy ballads and noise-riddled lacerations strutted lyrics that updated the Marquis de Sade. Since then, the band has become such a legend—and such a template—that it's worth pointing out again that almost none of their contemporaries went to their shows or bought their records.

All that's changed now for Lou Reed, the Velvets' guitarist/singer/songwriter, who's pursued an acclaimed if uneven career since. After touring for Amnesty International, making a Honda commercial, reuniting in 1989 with fellow ex-Velvet John Cale on a Warhol tribute, *Songs For Drella*, and releasing his own heralded *New York*, Reed's a more powerful presence on the rock scene than ever.

Reed's rock & roll legend begins on Long Island in 1957, when he formed the Shades to cut "So Blue" after dropping his classical piano studies. He went to Syracuse University and hung around poet Delmore Schwartz, joined bands with guitarist Sterling Morrison, then became a Tin Pan Alley-type songwriter for Coney Island's Pickwick Records, where he penned "The Ostrich," a potential dance hit that led the label to form the Primitives around him. Enter Cale, fresh from working with LaMonte Young's Dream Syndicate. After pulling in drummer Maureen Tucker, the then-Warlocks became the Velvet Underground on November 11, 1965 at a New Jersey high school gig. Between '67 and '69, they recorded *The Velvet Underground & Nico*, *White Light/White Heat*, *The Velvet Underground*, and *VU*.

Like other bands then, the Velvets dug into feedback and distortion, Middle Eastern drones and scales, drug use and druggy feels. Onstage, they were avenging zombies who wailed and shrieked; in the studio, like most first-generation psychedeliacs, they were turned down or recorded in the red.

"The first album, we're responsible for most of," he monotones. "We cut most of it in one day at the same studio where Dionne Warwick cut 'Walk On By,' which we really got off on. The second one, the engineer walked out. He said, 'I can't be paid to listen

to this. The needles are in the red.' Some of the ideas we were working on have become relatively accepted as a *modus operandi*—playing live at loud volumes with lots of distortion. It's not such a big deal now. It was then. Between the material, us as people, and the sound, we had difficulty. [Producer] Tom Wilson was the one person at that record company looking for new stuff, but in the studio he was a conservative person. He let you do what you wanted, in the end, but it didn't mean he liked it. Take 'European Son,' which came out of my listening to [Ornette Coleman's] *Free Jazz*. We thought we'd done something really great, but he made it plain he didn't think much of it.

"At the time I was listening to Ornette, Don Cherry, Pharoah Sanders, Albert Ayler. I loved Ornette's original quartet with Charlie Haden and Billy Higgins for the freedom that was there and the incredible melodies. 'Lonely Woman' is one of the most achingly beautiful pieces I've ever heard. And Charlie Haden's approach on bass was fascinating to me. I always heard a lot of rock & roll in what Ornette was doing, like in 'Ramblin'.' Cecil Taylor, too—'Excursion On A Wobbly Rail.' I don't want to sound pretentious, but I wanted to play guitar like Ornette Coleman played sax. Distortion made your guitar sound like a sax. Or even like a sax section, with all the overtones. Then when the overtones met the overtones of John's viola, you got this whole other thing. In my mind, it was the jazz stuff meeting my rock & roll background; I loved the solo on the Byrds' 'Eight Miles High' [itself inspired by Coltrane], and their droning and chiming. In John's, it was the avant-garde stuff he'd done. Maureen [Tucker] and Sterling [Morrison] were basic rock & rollers.

"There's the formality of the rock & roll song, of course—verse, chorus, bridge. But you could still really break it open, just by stripping it down, just by asking the question, 'Why is that happening?' Breaking the drums up is a good way to start rearranging how you hear. Maureen is brilliant, incomparable to this day, a completely different approach that never got locked into the damn trap set. The *New York* album was trying to bust that open. It's the same way jazz was trapped into the old thing: here's the theme, now you do a solo, then it goes to the piano, then. . . . Ornette stopped that.

"The Velvet Underground albums, whatever else they were, were first and foremost examples of creative freedom. The freedom to write about what you want, arrange it the way you want, and produce it the way you want. Anybody could do it. I really believed that then, and I really believe it now. There are forces to try and stop you—which is why we drove engineers out of the studio. That's one way of doing it, but you pay a price. The question ever since for me has been, 'How do you have that spontaneity and power and still have it sound right on the best systems as well as car radios and boom boxes?'"

Reed's '70s solo work seems to wander in search of an identity. Although albums like *Transformer* and *Berlin* snared glam-rockers and *The Bells* flashed his sarcasm, it was a time when he recycled or unearthed Velvets-period songs, mimicked fans like David Bowie, stopped playing the guitar with his usually uninspired bands. Says Reed, "I played less guitar in the '70s because I couldn't fit in with the bands I had. I couldn't find people I could play with, so what was the point? The *Rock 'N' Roll Animal* band was that kind of thing."

Of his stylistic shifts he says, "I'm a big fan of a lot of different things. You know: country & western's really fun, but I don't want to do a country & western song. I just like this or that part of country & western, of doo-wop, of jazz. That's how and why you change your music. During the Velvet Underground, we'd fine anybody in the band who did a blues lick. There were so many white quasi-blues bands at the time, mimicking what the blues guys did so much more powerfully, that mimicking it ourselves seemed pretty pointless. All the English guys were singing like they were black and from Mississippi. I wanted to be who I was;



WARING ABBOTT

which Dion had done for years, and I thought he sounded great. He absorbed so many styles—he was even a big fan of Hank Williams—but remained very much himself."

In 1981, Reed put his music in better hands than it had been since the Velvets. "*The Blue Mask* brought my guitar out again, because I had people I could play with—[guitarist Robert] Quine, Fred [Maher], and Fernando [Saunders]. Those are some serious guys to play with. And they could naturally play my way. Two basic parts

of the Velvet Underground were the drone and the two-guitar chime. That's one of the things Quine wanted to do. Fernando is one of the world's great bass players. And Fred is just one of those great natural rock & roll drummers. He can do it without even thinking about it, that little hop that you can't pay people to do." From elegies like "My House" to the raunch and scalding ironies of the title track and "Waves Of Fear," *The Blue Mask* is one of Reed's best.

The '80s limped out with more mainstream-oriented albums like *New Sensations*. By their end, with Warhol recently dead, and nostalgia gripping the industry, the pressure mounted for a Velvets reunion. Says Reed, "*Songs For Drella* set off a lot of hype, and a lot of expectations to go along with it. But the project was done for really honorable reasons." And thanks to Reed and Cale's refusal to puff it up in production, the tribute-as-snapshot-album remained simply and sparsely effective.

Just prior to and undoubtedly more explosive than *Drella*, there was *New York*, an album that found fans and critics primed. Cut mostly live, built around guitarists Reed and Mike Rathke, the almost-demo-sounding album fired off more socially-oriented statements than Reed had ever released.

Partly that was due to his work on the anti-apartheid *Sun City*, collaborating with musical agitators like Ruben Blades, and touring for Amnesty International. But it was also, he says, partly street reality seeping painfully in again, as it had during his Velvet days.

"I took three months to write it, over that incredible summer where no one could go to the beach. I was just expressing the thoughts of a lot of people who live here. Why are we staying? Because it's the greatest city on earth, that's why. But look at this, look at that. Within the morass, it's an album about transcendence. 'Beginning Of A Great Adventure' is about how a transcendent thing like having a kid could take place here, within our jazz-trio thing, with Rob Wasserman on stand-up [bass] while Fred's snapping his fingers."

Lou Reed's a deliberately "primitive" player. "When I'm looking at a solo, I prefer to have no idea where I am. It's one reason I like the Transtrem bridge on my guitars: I can go into another key and have no idea what's going on. That's a blessing. You find completely new voicings. These guys who are into scales, they're *trapped*. Give them something to play, and no matter what it is, you get the same old crap. They try to smoke you by playing fast. But somebody



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like Don Cherry can play three well-chosen notes that'll break your heart faster than a thousand from somebody like that. So because I'm not trapped into scales, I can sit down and hear a melody or stumble onto one by accident, or hit the Transtrem and throw myself into a region where there's no way I can know where I am but I've gotta go on following whatever melody I hear."

DB



WARING ABBOTT

his month, BMG Canada is releasing a three-CD anthology of Reed's solo albums, drawn from the 17 albums of his RCA and Arista years. At 70-plus minutes per CD, the 46 cuts include five either rare or never before released versions of "The Star Spangled Banner" that didn't make it onto *Growing Up In Public*; a version of "Heroin" with trumpeter Don Cherry, live at the Roxy in '76; a take of "Here Comes The Bride" from the '78 shows at the Bottom Line; "Voices Of Freedom" from *The Secret Policeman's Third Ball*; and "Little Sister" from the *Get Crazy* soundtrack.

Says producer Rob Bowman, whose compilation *The Otis Redding Story* (Atlantic 7 81762) is what got Reed interested in working with him, "I've gone through 800 pages of research and interviewed Lou for hours for this project." The results: a 20,000-word essay with some new details and a lot of info.

Reed himself is happy with the project. He said in November, "I helped choose the tracks, and I'm gonna be at the mastering, make it sound like I think it should, as much as I can. Bob Ludwig, who I admire tremendously, is gonna master it. He's both a friend and someone who's helped me enormously. When you go to Bob it's like going to church; you find out the truth, more than you ever wanted to know about what you did in the studio."

G.S.

LOU REED'S EQUIPMENT

Reed's guitars are custom-made by Roger Sadowsky, with pickups from Joe Barden, and also a pickup from Larry DiMarzio called Fred, his favorite. He also loves Steinbergers, and has a six- and a 12-string. "The 12-string actually stays in tune," he exults. "The trick of the Steinberger is to put heavier gauge strings on it. If you don't, it sounds like plastic." All his Steinbergers are outfitted with the Transtrem, which shifts pitches by repositioning the floating bridge.

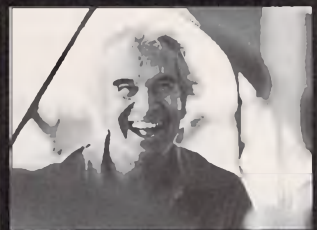
But his eyes glow most at his rack. "It's custom-made by Mike Soldano in L.A. One way of looking at the five-button foot pedal is: Clean, Dirty, Dirtier, Really Dirty, Distortion from Hell. The control parameters of his Eventide Ultra Harmonizer have names like Warble, because the engineers are players, too. Even I can understand what Warble means. There's another program called Crystal Meth. There's Jerry Garcia's program, called Garcia's Filter; it's a beautiful sound. Altogether there are 500 programs in this thing. It also makes breakfast!" Then there are the gadgets: a Casio synthesizer guitar and sampler, the SDR-1000 plus, closets and walls full of pedals and rack-mounted stuff, five tube preamps, Proco's Dual Rat, and his Mint Vibroverb with an old 15-inch.

LOU REED SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

SONGS FOR DRELLA - Sire 9 26140 (w/John Cale)
NEW YORK - Sire 9 25829
MISTRIAL - RCA AFL-1-7190
NEW SENSATIONS - RCA AFL-1-4908
LEGENDARY HEARTS - RCA AFL-1-4568
LIVE IN ITALY - German RCA 89156
THE BLUE MASK - RCA AFL-1-4221
GROWING UP IN PUBLIC - Arista AL 9522
THE BELLS - Arista AB 4229
ROCK AND ROLL HEART - Arista AL 4100
ROCK 'N' ROLL ANIMAL - RCA AFL-1-0472
BERLIN - RCA AFL-1-0207
TRANSFORMER - RCA AFL-1-4807
THE BEST OF THE VELVET UNDERGROUND - Verve 841 164
1969 VELVET UNDERGROUND LIVE - Mercury SRM-2-7504
VU - Verve 823 721-1-Y-1
THE VELVET UNDERGROUND - Verve 815 454-1-Y-1
WHITE LIGHT/WHITE HEAT - MGM M3F-4950
VELVET UNDERGROUND & NICO - MGM V6-5008

TAKE

70



SCENE

DAVE BRUBECK
AT 70

By Michael Bourne

I don't remember listening to jazz before high school in 1963 in St. Louis, but I remember, in chem lab, Dale to my left and Tom behind me were always talking about jazz. I was an opera freak but was curious and wanted to know some good jazz to begin with. They said to listen to the Dave Brubeck Quartet. And so, after school, in the music section of the A&P, I bought Brubeck's album *Time Out*—and I was thrilled!

"Blue Rondo à la Turk" was so energetic! "Take Five" was so . . . different from anything I'd ever experienced. And for me, best of all, was the music between the hits, "Strange Meadowlark" with the so-cool alto saxophone of Paul Desmond. I was, from that moment, addicted to this music.

Mine is not an unusual story. I sometimes tell the story when I play *Time Out* on the radio—and often listeners call to confess a similar awakening to jazz. So it was something of a pilgrimage to the source when I ventured to Brubeck's home in Wilton, Connecticut for this interview. It was December 7, 1990, the day after Brubeck's 70th birthday, and he was especially happy to have a new CD, *New Wine on MusicMasters*. Brubeck's quartet, with bassist/son Chris Brubeck, drummer Randy Jones, and longtime friend and clarinetist Bill Smith, recorded it live—as Brubeck always prefers—in Montreal in 1987, joined by Russell Gloyd conducting the Montreal International Jazz Festival Orchestra.

But it was inevitable that we began by talking about that first (for me and many others) album.

MICHAEL BOURNE: *Time Out* was the first jazz album certified gold. Were you amazed it became so popular?

DAVE BRUBECK: Columbia was against the album. Goddard Lieberson, the president, and Teo Macero, the producer, believed in it, but the sales force said we were breaking all the unwritten laws. There was a painting on the cover. They were all originals, which was hard to find before that album. They were not in 4/4 time that people could dance to. 5/4 ["Take Five"] hadn't been used hardly at all, there was 9/8 ["Blue Rondo"], and there weren't too many jazz waltzes when I started playing jazz waltzes. "Kathy's Waltz" was on there. Almost everything was slightly different and the sales force said people wouldn't buy the album—but "Blue Rondo" and "Take Five" were neck and neck all across the country. It was almost two years to get the single out, but when the sales force decided they had a winner, they released "Take Five" as a single and put all their weight behind it.

(1959's *Time Out*—with bassist Gene Wright, drummer Joe Morello, and Paul Desmond—was so successful that Columbia wanted more of the same from the Quartet. *Time Further Out*, with a Joan Mira painting on the cover, came next, then *Countdown—Time In Outer Space*, and *Time Changes*, all characterized by Brubeck's fascination with rhythms other than the usual straightahead 4/4.)

MB: Was there a moment when you wondered if the musical challenge of playing with time was turning into a gimmick?

DB: I'd started playing with time in 1947, even earlier. Bill Smith's arrangement of "What Is This Thing Called Love" for the octet—the bridge was in 7—and my early trio recordings had different

approaches. "Singin' In The Rain" started 6-6-3-3-6 and then went into 4. Fats Waller's "Jitterbug Waltz" predates me, but when we did "Alice In Wonderland" I'd never heard a jazz waltz.

MB: What usually came first, the rhythm or the tune?

DB: "Blue Rondo" was exactly from street musicians in Istanbul. I was going to a radio show and I heard street musicians play this rhythm. So when I got to the studio, I said to one of the musicians there that I'd heard this rhythm and I counted the time—and the whole orchestra joined in just like you might play the blues! It's common over there. I made up a melody in rondo form and I used, as a pun, "Blue Rondo à la Türk," like the Mozart. That's one reason Columbia put their weight on "Take Five"—because the title of "Blue Rondo à la Türk" was too long!

MB: It's ironic that "Take Five," the greatest of your hits, wasn't your own tune, but Desmond's.

DB: I just read an article by Joe Morello saying that "Take Five" was his idea, and, as I recall, that was true. Joe always warmed up with a drum pad backstage, and one night I heard Joe and Paul playing in 5/4 time. Paul had these two eight-bar themes he hadn't put together, and I said, "Why not this for a bridge?" Paul helped me with tunes, so I thought it was a good time to pay him back.

I titled it, but Paul always said he didn't like that title. . . . There's so many weird things about that tune, like they put the wrong take on the album. I wish we could find the take we wanted. . . . Paul left "Take Five" to the Red Cross. All of that money, the royalties, goes there.

(Dave Brubeck was born in Concord, California, and, at age 12, moved with his family to Ione, where his father managed a 45,000-acre cattle ranch. Brubeck's older brothers were both musicians. Henry was a jazz drummer. Howard was an assistant to the great French composer and teacher Darius Milhaud. Howard composed the Dialogues For Jazz Combo And Orchestra that Leonard Bernstein recorded with the New York Philharmonic and the Quartet.

Brubeck's father "needed a cowboy" and Dave studied to be a veterinarian, but his heart was in music, especially the jazz of Fats Waller and Art Tatum. After he survived the war, Dave studied with Milhaud at Mills College. It was in Milhaud's class that Brubeck's octet came together.)

MB: You named your first son Darius after Milhaud. What was the best lesson you learned from Milhaud?

DB: One lesson was to never give up jazz. And he told me I would be a composer on my own terms. I wasn't as schooled in music as my brothers. I didn't read well then and there was a lot of traditional European music I didn't know, but he thought I'd learn it on my own, which I've done. Most of what I picked up from Milhaud was through osmosis, just being around him, respecting him as a man, and loving his music.

MB: Milhaud's own music, like *Le Creation du Monde*, was influenced by jazz.

DB: That's why he told us never to give up jazz. He said, "If you don't reflect your own country and use the jazz idiom, you'll never be a part of this culture." And, of course, Copland used it, Bernstein used it. Most of the important American composers have used jazz.

(Brubeck's octet played mostly originals but was "very far ahead and couldn't get a job," so he separated the rhythm section, played mostly standards, and became quite popular. Brubeck's trio was voted "Combo of the Year" in 1949 in both the DOWN BEAT and Metronome polls. Paul Desmond often came to gigs

and played free and, though some club owners at that time protested that a trio was better than a quartet, the Dave Brubeck Quartet came together.)

MB: When did you first meet Paul Desmond?

DB: I was in the army on my way overseas. Dave van Kriedt said he should try out for our band at the Presidio in San Francisco. Paul's account was that he said, "Let's play the blues in B-flat," and I started in B-flat in the right hand and G in the left hand. He thought it was the strangest thing he'd ever heard.

There was a real affinity. Paul said we had ESP. I remember once we played the same mistake at the same time!

(Brubeck first recorded for Fantasy, a label he started with the brothers Saul and Max Weiss for \$350.

When the label seemed doomed to bankruptcy, he amicably split and, through producer George Avakian, had the Quartet signed with Columbia. Jazz Goes To College, released in the summer of 1954, was the first of many best-selling albums for Columbia and catapulted Brubeck onto the cover of the November 8, 1954 issue of Time magazine.)



TERI BLOOM

MB: Why were you the first jazz musician on the cover of *Time*?

DB: It wasn't just about me. It was similar to the recent Wynton Marsalis cover story. It was about jazz at that time.

I think Louis Armstrong was on before me. I wanted Duke to be on before me, because his music meant so much to me, and it embarrassed me that he wasn't. I was on tour with Duke, and we were in Denver. There was a knock at my door at 7 in the morning. And there's Duke, and he said, "You're on the cover of *Time*," and handed it to me! Duke did finally make the cover.

We had a tremendous following then. We opened the college circuit more than anyone else. But at the same time, we were the number-one group in the first black jazz poll in the *Pittsburgh Courier* in the early '50s. We played black clubs where white people didn't go, and also we were trying to break through with symphony orchestras.



The classic Quartet, circa 1960: (from l-r) Joe Morello, Brubeck, Gene Wright, and Paul Desmond

*(Following in the diplomatic footsteps of Dizzy Gillespie and Louis Armstrong, the Quartet toured Europe and the Middle East for the U.S. State Department in the latter '50s, eventually India and Japan as well. Brubeck and his wife Iola wrote a musical called *The Real Ambassadors*, inspired by Armstrong's travels, and the recording featured Pops himself. Brubeck also recorded a series of "Impressions" albums inspired by his own travels.)*

MB: You were one of the first jazz musicians to be excited by what is now called world music.

DB: If you could find a Ralph Gleason interview with me as early as 1949 in *DOWN BEAT*, I predicted that jazz was going to be a world music and that we would pick up the cultures and music around the world. I talked about how polyrhythmic African music is. African music is not in 4/4 like a European march, like rags. I'm sure that in Congo Square the pre-jazz still had that polyrhythmic quality. But jazz became like a European march. "Tiger Rag" was an exact copy of a Belgian march. I said, "If jazz is supposed to be African, why are we always in 4/4 time? Why aren't we playing polyrhythms?"

MB: When you play around the world, you have to play "Blue Rondo" or "Take Five" or both. Aren't you ever sick of your hits?

DB: If we don't play them, we don't go home. My last recording for Concord is from Moscow, and I played a solo on "Take Five" with a theme from the Shostakovich Fifth Symphony, in 5/4. Shostakovich was the reason I wanted to write for orchestra, because of that theme I quoted.

You respond to your surroundings, and your mind will float at things you can't believe. It's the wonderful mystery of music and especially jazz and improvisation. You don't know what's going to happen from one bar to the next. There are many different recordings of "Take Five" and "Blue Rondo," but it's not just a different solo. Usually the approach is also different.

MB: I'm curious where your piano style comes from. It's so percussive.

DB: Chet Baker always said I play like a drummer. I also play soft and lyrical. "Koto Song" [from *Jazz Impressions Of Japan and New Wine*] is so light you can hardly hear it. I do believe the piano is a percussion instrument. It's called a *pianoforte*, which means soft and loud. So why should people tickle around when they could be stomping?

*(An essential element in Brubeck's music is his faith. He's composed a variety of sacred works, e.g., *The Light In The Wilderness*, *Truth Is Fallen*, *The Gates Of Justice*, and *Mass For Hope*. He'll be recording some of his sacred and other orchestral music for MusicMasters.*

And, in the meantime, the Quartet plays on. Jack Six now plays bass while Brubeck's son Chris works on his own music. Darius, his eldest son, is teaching and playing jazz in South Africa. Michael and daughter Kathy don't perform,

*but Danny is the drummer for the jazz group the Dolphins, and Matthew, his youngest son, is a classical cellist. Darius, Chris, Danny, and Dave worked for several years in the '70s as *Two Generations of Brubeck*—and all four of his musical children joined the Quartet with Stephane Grappelli and the London Symphony Orchestra for sold-out 70th birthday concerts at the end of November in London.)*

MB: What have you learned at 70 after all these years on the road?

DB: Each day is a lesson, just to get through it and keep your head on straight. You learn through osmosis, like from Darius Milhaud. You learn from just being around Louis or Duke. You learn always to get the best guys in your band and do your finest work—and it all becomes part of you.

MB: You've been married to Iola for 48 years, and I know she keeps you going.

DB: Iola is an American Indian name. It means "a cloud at dawn" to one tribe and "never discouraged" to another tribe. . . . This wonderful home is my wife's way of anchoring me. But even when we lived in a tent, it was a good struggle and well worth it. It hasn't always been easy, but we've survived, we're still strong, we're still together. DB

DAVE BRUBECK'S EQUIPMENT

"I play the Baldwin SD-10 piano. I've got two of them. My practice piano is a Hamilton, which is also a Baldwin. I have a very light five-octave Yamaha electric piano I take on the road if I want to check something I've written. I never play it on stage. I only play a grand when I perform and Baldwin always sends me one, even to Europe."

DAVE BRUBECK SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

NEW WINE—MusicMasters 5051-2-C	JAZZ GOES TO COLLEGE—Columbia CK 45149
MOSCOW NIGHT—Concord CCD-4353	JAZZ IMPRESSIONS OF NEW YORK—Columbia CK 46189
BLUE RONDO—Concord CJ-317	BRUBECK/MULLIGAN/CINCINATTI—MCA MCAD-42347
REFLECTIONS—Concord CJ-299	LAST SET AT NEWPORT—Atlantic 1607 (w/ Gerry Mulligan)
FOR IOLA—Concord CJ-259	WE'RE ALL TOGETHER AGAIN FOR THE FIRST TIME—Atlantic 1641 (w/ Gerry Mulligan)
CONCORD ON A SUMMER NIGHT—Concord CJ-198	ALL THE THINGS WE ARE—Atlantic 1684
JAZZ AT OBERLIN—Fantasy OJC-046	25TH ANNIVERSARY REUNION—A&M CD 0806
JAZZ AT COLLEGE OF THE PACIFIC—Fantasy OJC-047	BRUBECK & DESMOND 1975: THE DUES—A&M CD 3290
REUNION—Fantasy OJC-150	
MUSIC FROM WEST SIDE STORY—Columbia CK 40455	
TIME OUT—Columbia CK 40585	
GONE WITH THE WIND—Columbia CK 40627	

MACEO PARKER

EVERYTHING'S CO

His sound is unmistakable. Bright, bold, rhythmically-charged, and gospeling, it served as the perfect foil for James Brown's funky invocations through the '60s and '70s. Check out the classic cuts like "Cold Sweat," "Lickin' Stick," "Poppa's Got A Brand New Bag," and "Popcorn." He's all over those tracks, blowing with gutsy authority in a style coming out of Hank Crawford but indelibly stamped with a quality all his own.

The Godfather of Soul would yell, "Maceo, I want you to blow!" And blow he did.

Maceo Parker was a young man when he jumped on the James Brown bandwagon back in 1965. Today, at 48, he's still blowing with youthful enthusiasm and is finally enjoying success as a solo artist. At the time of this interview, his *Roots Revisited* was sitting at #1 on the *Billboard* jazz charts (see "Reviews" Oct. '90). Simultaneously, his *For All The Kings Men* was making waves in rap circles on the strength of "Let Him Out," an urgent plea for the Godfather's imminent release from prison, which carries the lines:

"Hey judge, it ain't funny/Let the man out so we can make money. His time is up, he's made the grade/Let him out so we can get paid. Hey judge, don't be a jerk/Let the man out so we can go to work."

Plus, his signature sax wail also graces recent albums by P-Funk partner Bernie Worrell (*Funk Of Ages*), former J.B. associate Bootsy Collins (*Jungle Bass*), the neo-punk-funksters Limbomaniacs (*Stinky Grooves*), and retro-'70s disco darlings Deee-Lite (*World Clique*).

Suddenly, it seems, everything is coming up Maceo. Which wasn't exactly the case just a couple of years ago.

"Yeah, it's really happening now as opposed to two years ago when nothing was happening," he says while unwinding with a friendly game of pool in downtown Manhattan. "For years, I didn't really go knocking on any doors. I felt like my name was out there and if somebody was interested in me, the phone would ring. But it didn't. Not until this guy from Germany called me."

The guy in question was none other than Stephan Meyner, a jazz lover who runs the German Minor Music label. As Maceo recalls, "All throughout my life up until this *Roots Revisited* project, it's been all funky

music for me. That's the music I heard as a kid, that's what I grew up playing in North Carolina and that's what I've always wanted to do. Most kids coming up wanna play like Coltrane or Sonny Stitt or Charlie Parker or Cannonball Adderley. And that's probably one of the reasons why my style was a little bit different, because I didn't come up that way. I came up playing funky stuff . . . Meters, James Brown, Ray Charles, and all that kind of thing. My heroes were Hank Crawford, David Newman, and King Curtis, not Coltrane, Bird, and Cannonball.

"But when this cat from Germany said, 'Why don't we do a different album?' I thought it might be fun. So *Roots Revisited* was created."

On smooth, soulful renditions of Charles Mingus' "Better Get Hit In Yo' Soul," Ray Charles' "Them That Got," Jay McShann's "Jumpin' The Blues," and other jazzy fare, Maceo pulled in his longtime associates, trombonist Fred Wesley and tenor saxophonist Alfred "Pee Wee" Ellis. Together, the three comprise a telepathically tight horn section that alternately goes by the name of the J.B.s, the Horny Horns, and the Pee Wee Ellis All-Stars.

Says Maceo of his mates, "Fred came up as a jazz musician. I met him when he came into James' band around 1968, right before we did 'Cold Sweat.' And we just developed a special chemistry, but it didn't happen overnight or even within a year. It took a while for us to realize that the impact would be a little bit greater being together rather than separate. Every musician wants to do his own thing and someday have his own group and such things. But we just sort of realized that we'd have more impact if we just kind of teamed up. And not only did we do that, we picked up Pee Wee as well, which made it a really strong unit.

"During our time with James, Pee Wee was always a little more in the background, sort of behind the scenes as far as writing and arranging. Pee Wee was always there but you'd never hear about him. The first thing out of James' mouth was always, 'Maceo, blow your horn.' Or it might be, 'Fred, blow your horn.' But it was never 'Pee Wee, blow your horn.' James just felt that my style of playing fit with his style of music at the time, so that's why you didn't hear a lot of Pee Wee. But he's a great player as well as a great arranger. I consider him a 100 percent jazz cat while I think of myself as a little bit more middle-of-the-road, kind of leaning toward the funk."

Growing up in Kinston, North Carolina, where he still lives, Maceo and his two brothers were exposed to music at an early age. There was a piano in the house and his parents both played gospel music in the church. An uncle had a band called the Blue Notes that played around locally and served as a perfect role model for the three Parker brothers.

When it came time for them to choose instruments in elementary school, Maceo picked saxophone, older brother Kellis (now a professor of law at Columbia University) chose trombone, and younger brother Melvin took up drums. At the ripe old ages of 8, 9, and 10, they formed the Junior Blue Notes and began playing r&b music at parties and school functions. By the time he was 15, Maceo had forged his own style on the tenor sax.

As students at AT&T College in Greensboro, Maceo and Melvin were already seasoned pros. "We had started playing in nightclubs in sixth grade when our uncle would let us come up and play a few tunes during intermission. And we kept doing that all the way through college age, so that put us a little bit ahead of the other kids our age, in terms of experience on the bandstand."

In 1962, Melvin was playing drums in a group called Apex, a funky outfit that caught James Brown's ear when the Godfather of Soul happened to stop by their gig after his show at the Coliseum. Maceo was out of town that evening on a gig with a band called the Disciples, but when he returned home, he got an earful from brother Melvin.

"He told me that James Brown had been down to check them out and that he offered him a job. He said to Melvin, 'If there's ever a time when you're not a student and you want a job with me, you got it, automatically. Anytime, from right now . . . two years from now, three years from now, it don't matter.' So that became the big talk around campus for a while."

Maceo and Melvin remained in school for about another year and a half before they decided to take J.B. up on his generous offer. As Maceo recalls, "We went backstage after one of his shows and Melvin said to him, 'Hi, Mr. Brown. Remember me? I'm Melvin Parker, the drummer. You told me about a year and a half ago that if I wasn't in school anymore I could have a job. Well, guess what? I'm not a student anymore and I'd like a job."

"And James shook his hand and said,

WING UP MACEO!

By Bill Milkowski

'Nice to have you aboard.' But then Melvin said, 'Uh, excuse me, Mr. Brown. I'd like you to meet my brother Maceo. He's a saxophone player and he needs a job, too.'

J.B. hired Maceo as a baritone player, an instrument he had only played a couple of times in high school. The first sides he cut with that deep horn were "I Feel Good" and "Out Of Sight." When tenor saxman St. Clair Pinckney took ill for a couple of weeks, Maceo made the smooth transition to that horn. "I started doing some of the tenor solos, and then when St. Clair came back,

James had us switch off back and forth between baritone and tenor. And gradually it just evolved where he started playing everything on baritone and I started playing everything on tenor."

Maceo's first recording on tenor was "Poppa's Got A Brand New Bag." From 1970 to 1973, he formed his own band, Maceo & All The King's Men. "We did a couple of albums, but it didn't happen at all. And when I returned to James in 1973, he suggested that I start playing alto instead of tenor. The first time I recorded with that was a tune

called 'Do In' It To Death (Gonna Have A Funky Good Time).' And I've been playing alto ever since."

Maceo and his mates just completed recording his next album for Stephan Meyner, tentatively titled *Mo' Roots*. Minor Music is also releasing a Fred Wesley album co-starring Maceo, and there's a J.B.s project, *Pee Wee, Fred & Maceo*, which was released in Japan last year that hit stateside last month. And be on the lookout for an upcoming Bootsy tour with the Horny Horns.

It's been 25 years since James Brown first issued forth those immortal words: "Maceo, blow your horn!" And today that phrase resonates with as much vitality as ever. Which only goes to prove that you can't stop the funk. **DB**



JIM MOORE

MACEO PARKER'S EQUIPMENT

All throughout his career, Maceo has favored Selmer saxes. "I got one in high school and I've never stopped using them," he says. "Hank Crawford had one. David Newman had one. Cannonball had one. That was good enough for me." He is currently playing a Selmer Mark VI alto with Rico reeds.

MACEO PARKER SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader

PEE WEE, FRED & MACEO—Gramavision 79462
ROOTS REVISITED—Minor Music MM 801015
FOR ALL THE KING'S MEN—4th & B'Way 444 027

with James Brown

AIN'T THAT A GROOVE—Polydor 821 231-1 Y
DOIN' IT TO DEATH—Polydor 821 232-1 Y
THE BEST OF JAMES BROWN—Polydor PD-1-6340
GRAVITY—Scotti Bros. FZ-40380
IN THE JUNGLE GROOVE—Polydor 829624
JAMES BROWN SOLID GOLD—Polydor 829254
JAMES BROWN'S FUNKY PEOPLE—Polydor 829417
THE CD OF JB—Polydor 825714
SEX MACHINE—Polydor PD-2-9004

with Bernie Worrell

FUNK OF AGES—Gramavision R2 79460
ALL THE WOO IN THE WORLD—Arista AD 4209

with Bootsy Collins

JUNGLE BASS—4th & B'Way 444 023
WHAT'S BOOTSY DOIN'?—Columbia FC 441007
ULTRA WAVE—Warner Bros. BSK 3433
THIS BOOT IS MADE FOR FONK-n—Warner Bros. BSK 3295
BOOTSY?—Warner Bros. BSK 3093
AHH... THE NAME IS BOOTSY, BABY!—Warner Bros. BS 2972
STRETCHIN' OUT IN BOOTSY'S RUBBER BAND—Warner Bros. BS 2920

with Parliament-Funkadelic

R&B SKELETONS IN THE CLOSET—EMI ST-12481
FUNKENTELECHY VS THE PLACEBO SYNDROME—Casablanca 824501
MOTHERSHIP CONNECTION—Casablanca 824502
GLORYHALLASTOOPID—Casablanca NBLP 7195
MOTOR BOOTY AFFAIR—Casablanca NBLP 7125

with Fred Wesley

SAY BLOW BY BLOW BACKWARDS—Atlantic SD 19254
FRED WESLEY & FRIENDS—Minor Music (to be released)

Wizards

Record Producers and Their Craft

By Eugene Holley

For producers as well as musicians, early recording sessions were often rough-and-tumble affairs. The equipment was decidedly low-tech—the first recordings were mechanical and depended on a stylus cutting a groove into a wax cylinder. The surroundings could be acoustical nightmares—Count Basie's first sessions were cut in a Chicago Loop office building with the rumble of the el train regularly interrupting the music-making. The recording sessions of the mythic bluesman Robert Johnson—which in digitally remastered form climbed the *Billboard* pop charts this winter—were essentially field recordings: one made in a hotel room and the other in a warehouse.

By the '40s, the recording process was closer to what we know today with a producer in charge of a session that took place in a studio, directing both the musicians and engineer and keeping the whole project on track and under budget. These individuals were from all walks of life: writers, critics, fans, and other patrons of the arts who wanted to get closer to the music they loved. In those days, producers did not spend a lot of time working on pre-production, rehearsals, mic set-ups, and so on. Because of the time constraints of the 10-inch, 78-rpm disc (usually no more than three minutes), producers were often more concerned with how much time was spent in the studio rather than the aesthetics of the performance.

"I learned producing on the job," explains Orrin Keepnews, president of Landmark Records and the recipient of DB's Lifetime Achievement Award in 1986. He founded Riverside Records in 1953 with Bill Grauer, and ran the earliest sessions of Thelonious Monk, Wes Montgomery, and Cannonball Adderley. "None of us from the '40s and '50s—people like Blue Note's Alfred Lion, Commodore's Milt Gabler, Prestige's Bob Weinstock, and Keynote's Harry Lim—had the advantage of professional training, because there wasn't any. We were all self-taught, and since we all had a certain sense of competitiveness with each other, we didn't learn from each other. We worked out our own way of doing things."

But today, just as young jazz musicians learn from the recordings of old jazz musicians, young producers may learn from the recordings of older producers. Take Delfeayo Marsalis, whose credits include recordings by his brothers Branford and Wynton as well as Harry Connick, Jr., Marcus Roberts, and Courtney Pine.

"I would go into Columbia Record's archives to look at publicity pictures from Teo Macero's sessions to study what kind of mics he used and where he placed them," says Marsalis. "I have the most respect for Teo, because he was never afraid to embrace technology, but he always depended on his ear, and that's the key."

The producer—depending on the singers and musicians involved, the type of music, and individual personalities—may act as autocrat or social worker, as exploiter or patron, as technician or *artiste* . . . or in varying combinations of all of the above. But producers all seem to agree that their primary role should be as catalytic agent.

"It's the artist's album, not the producer's," explains Keepnews. "As a producer, you have to decide whether you'll use a particular take, where to edit, the length of time, where the tune should go on the record, all of those things. However, you should make those decisions with the artists' conception in mind."

"Most of the musicians I've worked with—Bill Evans in particular—were always dissatisfied with their work," adds Helen



Orrin Keepnews and Larry Coryell at the recording session for Sonny Rollins' *Don't Ask*

Keane, whose credits also include production work with Art Farmer, Tony Bennett, Kenny Burrell, and Walter Davis, Jr. "You have to be objective enough to know what a good take is and reassure your artist that the take you have is good enough for the record. If you leave the producing up to the musicians, the record may never get done, because they usually are never satisfied."

When the artist trusts the producer's instincts and ear to guide him or her through the recording process, the benefits from that relationship can carry on past the record date. When Michael Cuscuna, co-founder (with Dan Lourie) of Mosaic Records and winner in the producer category of DB's 1990 Critics Poll, was producing a live date for saxophonist Joe Henderson, he suggested two tunes to be included: Sam Rivers' "Beatrice" and Monk's "Ask Me Now." Henderson liked them so much that he included them in his standard repertoire.

of

Aud

The most important thing I learned with Thelonious [Monk] is that the producer's main purpose is to provide the proper environment in which the musicians can best function."

—Orrin Keepnews



Walter Becker (left) in his private production studio, Maui Recording, with his partner, writer/producer/engineer John Neff



Helen Keane talks shop with guitarist Kenny Burrell at N.Y.C.'s Hip Pocket Recording

"That's a nice feeling," says Cuscuna, "to know that he liked them so much, and you as a producer really contributed to the artist."

Technological change—whether it's multi-track recording, improved mics, or signal processing (such as compression, equalization, reverb) gave the producer new tools to apply in the process of capturing the musicians' artistic concepts. When the multi-track recorder was invented in the late '50s, the producer was now able to isolate each instrument into channels or tracks, which would allow the artist to record parts over another music track at a later date. Teo Macero, best known for his work with Duke Ellington, Charles Mingus, and Monk when they recorded for Columbia, experimented with various microphone configurations and signal processing in recording Miles Davis' classic albums of the '60s.

"I would record Miles in three channels—I'd put a delay on one program, put the echo on another, and bring up the mute on the third channel and play around with the mix until we got the sound we wanted," says Macero. "As far as editing goes, I would make a copy of a complicated section of tape, and then edit that section and see if it could be done, and then go to the final take."

"I spend a lot of time making edits so that it sounds spontaneous and so that it sounds like one take," explains Marsalis, who believes in editing to make it sound realistic. "With 24-track digital, you can record the drums up to a certain point, and then the bass up to a different point, and then the piano. What that does is trick the ear into thinking that the tempo stays the same."

Overdubbing has been used extensively by rock and pop musicians, less so by jazz players. While this method gave the producer more flexibility in the studio, the process—when overdone—can stretch out for months. Just ask Walter Becker.

"The first Steely Dan album was done in three months," remembers Becker, the group's guitarist. "Our last album [*Gauche*] took about two years to make. There was kind of an escalating sense of perfectionism. As we became more ambitious, it took longer and longer to get what we wanted. We felt that a thing had to be as great as we could possibly make it, or it wasn't good enough to go on the record."



Delfeayo Marsalis (right) captures sound with his favorite engineer, Patrick Smith

Becker, now a producer himself who has worked with Ricky Lee Jones, pianist Andy LaVerne, and Steely Dan mate Donald Fagen, thinks "what is actually the most fun is to get a bunch of guys together and do it all live at one time."

That's a way of doing business that is taken for granted in the recording of blues. The best results forgo the overdubbing process as much as possible. Bruce Iglauer, producer and president of Chicago's Alligator Records, tries to capture the energy of a live club date in the studio. "I'm working on a new album with Son Seals. Son likes to go and cut it just like he does it on the bandstand: live vocals, live solos. He'd rather do the song over if he's not satisfied. I enjoy recording that way a lot because it's exciting, and you get the communication between the musicians."



CREED TAYLOR—BACK IN THE SWING

Producer Creed Taylor, who's work has spanned over three decades, recently stepped into the '90s in a bold way with his first offering in several years. *Rhythmstick* (see "Reviews" p. 44) is the all-star debut of the revamped CTI label, featuring such stars as Dizzy Gillespie, Phil Woods, Charlie Haden, John Scofield, and Flora Purim.

The recording, a tribute to Gillespie's unification of the rhythms displaced throughout the African diaspora, has that vintage CTI sound, marvelously recorded by Rudy Van Gelder, and is available in the CD, laserdisc, and video formats. Distributed worldwide by Polygram Records, the session was filmed by special cameras for high-definition television (HDTV), which produces near holographic images.

"What I wanted with this record," explains Taylor, "is to show how Dizzy is the guru of world rhythm by putting together this collection."

With the backing of the Saison Group, a Japanese business conglomerate, Taylor decided it was time to return to the studio, using digital and video technology to get his music to a wider audience. "With the advent of the DAT and the compact disc coming into it's own, along with high-definition technology in the visual end, I decided to come out with something that gives CTI a higher profile in the world marketplace." —E.H.

With the advent of the LP in the early '50s, a new responsibility fell to the producer: sequencing, putting individual tracks into an order that would hopefully grab the listener, hold onto them, and make them flip the record over.

"You can make or break a record with the sequencing. With proper sequencing," explains Keane, "each track evolves into the other, with varying degrees of nuance, timbre, and pitch, so that the record sounds like a suite. When it's done improperly, sequencing can make a record sound incomplete and not well thought out."

The advent of the CD has added another wrinkle to sequencing. Cuscuna, a free-lance producer who has worked with a wide range of both jazz and pop artists, from Bonnie Raitt to Woody Shaw, thinks the CD has been good for jazz in that "you no longer have to have 18-minute sides. When you program, you program from start to finish, just like a guy would do a set in a club."

As music moves into the '90s, the digital technology of CDs is replacing the analog record album and may itself be replaced by DAT. As videos have replaced film, will they soon be replaced by laserdiscs and high-definition television? Will cameras be an integral part of future recording sessions? With technology developing at an alarming rate, the record producer must maintain a balance between the dictates of the machine and the music.

DB

Wallace Roney

INTO

by Tom Nuccio

WALLACE RONEY'S EQUIPMENT

Wallace Roney plays a Martin Committee trumpet with a custom-made, deep-cup mouthpiece comparable in diameter to a size 1C. He is quick to admit the reason and precedent behind his selection. "Dizzy Gillespie made it popular, and as a result, Miles, Clifford [Brown], Lee Morgan, and Blue Mitchell all played it. I play it because they're my idols and I love its sound."

WALLACE RONEY SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader

THE STANDARD BEARER — Muse 5372

INTUITION — Muse 5346

VERSES — Muse 5335

with Tony Williams

NATIVE HEART — Blue Note 793170

ANGEL STREET — Blue Note 748494

CIVILIZATION — Blue Note 746757

FOREIGN INTRIGUE — Blue Note 746289

with Art Blakey

FEELING GOOD — Delos 4007

KILLER JOE — Storyville 4100

with Cindy Blackman

ARCANE — Muse 5341

Roney: A TRUMPETER'S INTUITION

Seated behind a desk in the offices of Muse Records, trumpeter Wallace Roney has the eager look of an executive who can't wait to get down to business. The next item on his calendar: a 10 p.m. appointment with drummer Tony Williams at the Village Vanguard. It's an appointment that Roney—the trumpet TDWR in DB's 1990 Critics Poll—has kept hundreds of times in the past four years.

He greets these "business trips," which frequently take him to Europe and the Far East, with enthusiasm because Williams' quintet is a creative partnership that still allows for some fun. Roney explains that "sometimes, when I'm soloing, we'll play these musical games where I might quote from a recorded trumpet solo and he'll play the lick the drummer played under it. If I play a Blue Mitchell lick from Horace Silver's *Blowin' The Blues Away* album, he'll play exactly what [drummer] Louis Hayes played under it. He knows so much music and so much about the music."



Wallace Roney and pianist Mulgrew Miller at a rehearsal.

Playing with Williams, Roney has realized one of his dreams from a childhood dominated by the influence of jazz. Born in Philadelphia on May 25, 1960, he developed a precocious aptitude for jazz trumpet playing "from listening to my father's numerous records. By the time I was six, I could recognize Miles, Dizzy, Blue Mitchell, and Lee Morgan when I heard them on the radio," he recalls. Around this time, Roney's father bought him his first trumpet and by the age of 11, his lessons were underway at Philadelphia's Settlement School Of Music. Further studies ensued during his high school years in Washington, D.C. at the Duke Ellington School Of The Arts, where he became a preferred pupil of bassist Mickey Bass. While enrolled at Howard

University in Washington, Roney frequently jaunted to New York, and on one memorable trip, sat in with saxist Joe Henderson.

After a year at Howard—where he won a DB Student Music Award—Roney transferred to Berklee College, attracted by the Jazz Messengers on the faculty, the school's proximity to New York City, and by Art Blakey himself. The plan worked to perfection: three months into his first term at Berklee, he learned that Wynton Marsalis was leaving Art Blakey's big band and promptly shot down to New York for a live audition at the Bottom Line. When Roney left the club, he had landed the gig which initiated his professional career.

Like all Blakey alumni, Roney maintains a fond respect for the man who taught him so much. The recollection of one such lesson brings a smile to the trumpeter's face. "When playing with Art, I would frequently break into double-time during my solos. Well, one night after I finished one of those solos, Art said, 'Roney, come here.' I thought he was going to congratulate me, but instead he told me, 'When you double up, don't stop swinging.' After that, I got gun shy and refrained from double-time for a while. Then I tried it again, and swung. After that gig, Art smiled and said, 'Man you played your ass off.' Thanks to Art, I recognized the need to maintain a swing feel regardless of the tempo."

Roney made his major recording debut on Blakey's *Killer Joe* album but then left the band when Wynton Marsalis reclaimed his spot toward the end of 1981. This commenced a free-lance period which brought on sideman work with McCoy Tyner, Cedar Walton, Chico Freeman, Walter Davis, Jr., and Philly Joe Jones. Work sometimes came infrequently during this period, but by 1986, he found himself holding down two full-time jobs. Roney joined Tony Williams' newly-formed quintet and, shortly thereafter, Blakey invited him back as well. He managed to uphold both commitments for a while before this juggling routine forced him to make a choice. To Blakey's dismay, Roney opted for Williams. "It was a difficult decision because I enjoyed both groups. However, Tony was playing music that would take me further and make me think of more advanced playing methods, which is what I wanted."

The challenging chord changes in Williams' material allowed Roney to employ

upper-chordal extensions in his improvisations—a technique which he has taken great labors to advance. "By adding upper extensions [9ths, 11ths, and 13ths] to basic chords, you actually create another chord on top of the existing one," he explains. "You can reach beyond the basic chord and use the chord formed by the extensions in your solos. This style intrigues me because it allows room to create your own conception and expand your possibilities."

Roney's exploits with upper-chordal extensions are exhibited on his four Blue Note recordings with Williams and a trio of leader dates he's made for Muse. Overall, Roney's Muse recordings display a continuity which stems from their common, youthful personnel. Saxophonist Gary Thomas and pianist Mulgrew Miller appear on all three while bassist Charnett Moffett and drummer Cindy Blackman contribute to two. Roney has also augmented the regular crew with seasoned veterans. His 1987 debut recording, *Verses*, features the potent stickwork of Tony Williams while the sequel, entitled *Intuition*, annexes the experience of bassist Ron Carter. In his conception of the recording process, Roney treats the studio just like another live venue. "Some people might consider my music unpolished, but that's just my style of recording. I don't try to make the heads perfect. If someone makes a slight mistake on the tune, that's the way it would have come across live. I sacrifice perfection for spontaneity." Roney's fourth Muse release is due out this summer.

When he's not occupying the front line in the Tony Williams Quintet, Roney performs with drummer Elvin Jones and occasionally leads his own group. In addition, whenever time permits, the trumpeter laces up the gloves for a boxing workout at Manhattan's Times Square Gym. "My father used to box and introduced me to the sport. It's just a hobby that keeps me in shape. It's interesting, though, that other trumpeters like Miles, Clark Terry, and Kenny Dorham also used to box."

Much like any serious heavyweight contender, Roney approaches his music with aggressive determination and a resolve to always play better. "I've got to grow," he asserts. "I can't simply remain at the same level of playing unless I can't get past it. If that's the case, then I'll keep pounding at it until I can push past it." With such a fighting attitude, Wallace Roney is set to punch past any obstacle within his reach. **DB**

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



WYNTON MARSALIS

THE ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK FROM TUNE IN TOMORROW . . . —Columbia 47044: *BIG TROUBLE IN THE EASY; KINGS OF THE GARDEN DISTRICT; CRESCENT CITY CRAWL; ALLIGATOR TAIL DRAG; MAY BE FACT OR FICTION; SOCIAL SOFT SHOE; MAMA LEONA; I CAN'T GET STARTED; THE GRAND MARSHALL; THE WAYS OF LOVE; ON THE EVE OF ENTRY; DON'T RUN FROM FUN; ALBANIANS; SUNSETTIN' ON THE BAYOU—DUSK ON THE DELTA/YAS, YAZ, YAZ, ALL-NIGHT JAZZ/PRE-MORNING MASQUERADE AT THE CAFE DU MONDE; THE WAYS OF LOVE; DOUBLE RONDO ON THE RIVER.* (63:36)

Personnel: Marsalis, trumpet; Alvin Batiste, Michael White, clarinet; Wes Anderson, Harvey Estrin (cut 13), alto saxophone; Todd Williams, tenor saxophone, clarinet; Herb Harris, tenor saxophone; Joe Temperley, baritone saxophone; Wycliffe Gordon, trombone; Marcus Roberts, piano; Warren Bernhardt (2), Lucky Peterson (3), organ; Reginald Veal, bass; Herlin Riley, drums; Johnny Adams (5), Shirley Horr (8,10), vocals.

★★★★

This reviewer isn't a big fan of Wynton's albums—indeed, feels some of them have been wildly overpraised in these pages. But this soundtrack made me grin from the opening bars of "Big Trouble"—the album's first of many examples of uncannily faithful, forged Ellingtonia. It's full of perfect Jimmy Hamilton swoops and dips, Cootie wah-wah work, Sam Woodard rim shots, and Harry Carney's bari bottom (courtesy Batiste, Marsalis, Riley and Temperley). It's as if Wynton had fed Duke's mid-'50s to mid-'60s stylistic traits into a computer and told it to write like the master—if a computer had Ducal wit. The tunes—fast, slow, jauntly, or cha cha cha—aren't as memorable as Duke's, and pianist Roberts lacks the precisely weighted touch that made Ellington one of the very greatest jazz pianists, but Marsalis gets the feel so right you barely notice. It's a stunt, but it works. You have to hear it to believe it.

About half the music fits the delightful counterfeit concept—there's also a jumping Johnny Adams blues, two urbane Shirley Horn vocals, Bernhardt's period-soap-opera organ theme ("Kings"), a little cocktail party music, and New Orleans jazz. But Marsalis lets Ellington's ideas seep into some non-imitative stuff—like "Alligator," a Crescent City dirge with pastel reeds and the leader's wah-wah trumpet. As composer, he uses Duke as he once used Miles as an improviser—as a springboard to finding his own voice.

Wait, you'll say—isn't the reviewer praising exactly the sort of thing he usually scoffs at Marsalis for: studiously recreating the past

instead of inventing something new? Yup. But I love it. And I'd be a ninny to deny its pleasures for dogma's sake. (reviewed on CD)

—Kevin Whitehead



BOBBY McFERRIN

MEDICINE MAN—EMI 7-92048-2: *MEDICINE MAN; BABY; YES, YOU; THE GARDEN; COMMON THREADS; SWEET IN THE MORNIN'; DISCIPLINE; HE RAN ALL THE WAY HOME; ANGRY; THE TRAIN; SOMA SO DE LA DE SASE; THE 23RD PSALM.* (49:13)

Personnel: McFerrin, voice; Lyle Mays, keyboards (cut 5); Robert McFerrin, Sr., vocals (6); Voicestra (6, 7); Pete Escovedo and Juan Escovedo, percussion (10).

★★★★

The simplest utterance in Bobby McFerrin's impressive oeuvre transformed into his critical cross and commercial joy: "don't worry, be happy," as he wryly urged listeners on his reggae-charged ditty. The fluke hit culminated in a Grammy sweep two years ago and led lovers of his jazz-inclined early works to suspect crossover dreaming on the singer's part. We wondered if McFerrin, in his own clever way, could be pulling an Al Jarreau. We were worried. We weren't happy.

But rest assured. On his last album's golden heels, McFerrin returns with a beautiful tribute to the original instrument, the human voice—mostly his own, swimming in a vocal hotpool. The medicine he is serving up on *Medicine Man* is no over-the-counter tonic, but a moving collection of voice-specific inventions. Stylistic reference points leap about with gleeful disregard for purism, from the ethereal sonorities of a gospel choir to doo-wopping funk to salty bits of jazz scat-ology to a rich a-cappella luster reminiscent of Ladysmith Black Mambazo. McFerrin's elfin humor occasionally colors the affair, but this is by far his most serious work yet—in both the emotional and aesthetic senses.

Whereas, in the past, McFerrin has documented his rare art of solo-voice performance, he plunges headlong into studiocraft here, drawing on the formality of multiple overdubs and the use of his 10-voice ensemble Voicestra to add a new textural density. The most haunting piece on this set is not one at all suitable for bumper-sticker mantras, but the rueful theme to Robert Epstein's documentary *Common Threads: Stories From The Quilt*, about the AIDS quilt project. With his lushly-harmonized variation on "The 23rd Psalm," McFerrin closes a thoughtful and fully satisfying album on a fittingly prayerful note. (reviewed on CD)

—Josef Woodard



RONALD SHANNON JACKSON

TABOO—Venture VF 47: *MENTAL HOLIDAY: A. VACATING THE BODY, B. AIN'T SUPPOSED TO BE, C. NO ROUTINES, D. FORGIVE ME, E. BE BACK SHORTLY; TABOO; MOTHERS AND SONS; CHALLENGE TO MANHOOD; LITTLE THINGS THAT COUNT.*

Personnel: Jackson, drums, oboe, voice (cut 10); Eric Person, alto, soprano, baritone saxes (1-6); Zane Massey, alto sax (8-10), tenor sax (7); Lee Rozie, soprano sax (7); Henri Scott (9, 10), David Gordon (7), trumpet; Robin Eubanks, trombone (1-6); Akbar Ali, violin (1-6); Vernon Reid, guitar; Onaje Allan Gumbs, DX7 (1-6); Bruce Johnson, Melvin Gibbs, electric bass.

★★★★

RED WARRIOR—Axiom 539 872-2: *RED WARRIOR; ASHES; GATE TO HEAVEN; IN EVERY FACE; ELDERS; WHAT'S NOT SAID.* (38:42)

Personnel: Jackson, drums; Jef Lee Johnson, Stevie Salas, Jack DeSalvo, guitar; Ramon Poo-ser, Conrad Mathieu, bass.

★★ 1/2

Since forming his Decoding Society in 1979, drummer Jackson has been melding elements of rock, funk, jazz, and world musics into an intriguing harmolodic gumbo. Some of his experiments along the way have been more successful than others. (1985's *Decode Yourself* pales next to 1982's *Man Dance*, for instance.) These two new releases invite further comparisons.

Taboo, recorded a few years back with the core of the *Man Dance* band, is by far the superior effort both in terms of its compositional depth and the improvisational skills of the soloists involved. "A Mental Holiday," the lengthy suite comprising all of side one, is Shannon's compositional triumph here. Strictly-arranged harmony lines, a Jackson trademark, bob and weave in and out of the organic flow as individuals step forward one by one to let their voices be heard. The funky "Ain't Supposed To Be" section is anchored by Melvin Gibbs' muscular basslines and fueled by Vernon Reid's raucous metaloid flights on the fretboard. The "No Routines" section features some fine violin work by Ali while the "jazzy" section of this suite, "Forgive Me," makes room for a great Robin Eubanks trombone solo and a blistering baritone solo by Eric Person on a furiously swinging uptempo groove. "Mothers And Sons" features an adventurous Zane Massey improvising over some spacious atmospherics while Henri Scott plays Cat Anderson on "Challenge To Manhood." Jackson's orchestral offering grounded by a big-beat Ginger Baker-styled shuffle. And on the album's closer,

"Little Things That Count," Jackson pulls out the brushes and swings the band with finesse. (reviewed on LP)

There's nothing subtle or swinging at all about *Red Warrior*, an unadulterated rock project that eliminates the horns and focuses on a mini-guitar army that goes for the jugular with heavy-metal abandon. A recent recording, *Red Warrior* shows the effect that Last Exit (the bombastic improv ensemble he plays in with Peter Brotzmann, Sonny Sharrock, and Bill Laswell) has had on Jackson's music. From the sound of this album, it seems that the drummer may now be more interested in courting Motor-

head fans than in impressing Ornette Coleman fans. And with the distortion-soaked stylings of Stevie Salas, Jef Lee Johnson, and Jack DeSalvo, rock-guitar aficionados will have plenty to chew on.

Red Warrior does have its moments. Namely "Ashes," the brooding piece that sounds like a metal version of Ornette's "Lonely Woman," and the rubato thrash anthem, "In Every Face," which turns Shannon loose to traverse the kit with polyrhythmic aplomb. But the low points outweigh the high. Like "Gate To Heaven," a mediocre slide-guitar showcase that sounds like the Allman Brothers on a very bad night,

and a tedious 13½-minute mess entitled "Elders," chock-full of flailing noise guitars and clubfooted Led Zeppelin beats. (A harmolodic "Stairway To Heaven"?) The album closes with a heavy-metal nursery rhyme, "What's Not Said."

While record retailers will no doubt file this one under jazz, taking Jackson's history of playing with Charles Mingus, Albert Ayler, Cecil Taylor, and Ornette Coleman into consideration, it's clear that *Red Warrior* ought to be placed in the rock bins alongside the likes of Steve Vai and Joe Satriani. (reviewed on CD)

—Bill Milkowski

ALL THE MINGUS HE WAS

by Kevin Whitehead

He could be erratic and violent. Even so, bassist **Charles Mingus** was the model jazz musician: a virtuoso and self-starter, a searcher for new compositional forms, a leader who demanded passionate commitment and individual sounds from sidemen, a champion of new and overlooked talents, a traditionalist who valued the soul of the Black Church, the complexities of European music and maverick innovators like Lennie Tristano. All these Minguses are in Fantasy's latest budget-buster, *Charles Mingus: The Complete Debut Recordings* (Debut 12-DCD-4402-2; 14 hours, 9 minutes:★★★★½).

With help from friends and lovers, Mingus and Max Roach founded the Debut label in 1952; this 12-CD box holds every surviving piece recorded for the label on which Mingus played: 169 tracks (64 newly issued) out of 21 sessions, from 1951 (a duo date with pianist Nadi Qamar, aka Spaulding Givens) to 1958 (percussion-heavy stuff recorded for, but not used in, John Cassavetes' film *Shadows*). It excludes the few Debut dates on which he doesn't appear (some of which are already out as OJCs); the only track Mingus isn't on is a Max solo from the famous 1953 Massey Hall Toronto concert headlining Bird, Diz, and Bud. Much of that concert appears here twice: as released on LP, with Charles' bass parts postdubbed in the studio, resulting in a loss of overall sound quality; in superior, undoctored form, the bass (contrary to legend) is quite audible. Live recordings weren't sacred for Mingus—in the studio, with Billy Taylor subbing for Bud, he concocted a bass feature he snuck onto Bud's Massey Hall LP, with fake applause tagged on.

The variety here is staggering; five piano trio dates include the florid/high-caloric Hazel Scott and the economical Paul Bley. But the best trio pianist is the advanced John Dennis, whose glowing dissonances nibble at the edges of his chords, and whose rhythms can suggest baroque



Charlie Mingus, model jazz musician

music—an "All The Things You Are" with a terrific Roach break—or a Caribbean steel band. There's an unfairly maligned little quintet session starring Miles Davis, a nicely moody four-ballad affair, and two sessions featuring newcomer Thad Jones, whose darting open horn and beautiful mute work justify Mingus' raves.

Even so, the box won't blow you away on first listen. The tapes were carelessly handled and stored over the years, so sound's not pristine. And though the mid-'50s found Mingus coming into his own as a leader, he recorded some of his best stuff then for other labels. Giving other musicians a shot, he's a sideman on many sessions—like a live four-trombone jam including Jay and Kai—and gives the spotlight to some singers of dubious merit, among them the harmonizing Gordons, who try to be hip but come off square, the icky Bob Benton—and Jackie Paris, who redeems himself with a bizarre blues that has Mingus' outsize sensibility stamped all over it.

Back then, Mingus was in the thrall of Tristano (a '52 date includes Lee Konitz, and pieces with Tristic titles: "Extrasensory Perception," "Precognition"), and he explored orchestral colors, reminding us that Mingus, for all his fire, was still a West Coast musician. Significantly, five sessions employ cello, including one led by plucker Oscar Pettiford; you can hear Mingus' love for cello in his own

singing arco bass. Immersing yourself in sessions with languid rhythms and (sometimes) soggy strings makes the epic '55 Cafe Bohemia sessions that much more of a breakthrough. The difference between the orchestrally-full Bohemia quintet (including emerging pianist Mal Waldron and still-overlooked trombone great Eddie Bert) and the larger studio ensembles is mostly a matter of rhythm. On other folks' sessions here, Mingus rarely upstages, but he plowed his quintet along with relentless bass. You can hear his ecstatic, blues-drenched future in this session, which yielded his first "Haitian Fight Song." Best of all, 11 of the 23 Bohemia takes are new finds. It's great stuff—but if you can't spare the big bucks, the Debut LP sampler *Autobiography In Jazz* (OJC 115) is a good overview; some representative Bohemia stuff's on OJC 045.

Mysterious Blues (Candid 79042; 58:39:★★★★½) is an outgrowth of another big box, Mosaic's *Complete Candid Recordings Of Charles Mingus*. This grabbag rounds up stuff Mingus recorded for Candid in the fall of 1960 that's not already out on Candid's CDs *Charles Mingus Presents Charles Mingus* (essential, no excuses), *Mingus*, or the previous grabbag *Reincarnation Of A Lovebird*. This gets confusing, so stay close: it includes two tracks from the old Candid LP anthology *Newport Rebels* ("Mysterious Blues"—Chaz plus Roy Eldridge, Dolphy, Knepper, Tommy Flanagan, and Jo Jones; "Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams," same lineup sans Dolphy and Knepper); three that first appeared in the Mosaic box ("Me And You Blues," with some beautifully lowdown Eldridge—same unit as on "Troubles"; a "... Lovebird" for septet; Dannie Richmond's solo "Melody From The Drums"); "Vasserlean," originally on the Candid LP compilation *The Jazz Life* but already out on the *Mingus* CD; and one newly-released track Mosaic missed, an alternate take of "Body And Soul"—same lineup as "Mysterious Blues," with doubletiming Dolphy following Roy. Note that it's not the same one that's on *Reincarnation*, though both are listed as "Take 2." Got that? Obviously it's a discographical mess. But this CD does, finally, exhaust the Candid Mingus lode—or so we're told. (all reviewed on CD) **DB**

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BUNNY WAILER

GUMPTION—Shanachie 43079: SOUNDS CLASH; PIEKA "BUS DEM SHUT"; DOG WAR; SEE AND BLIND; WARRIOR; NEVER GROW OLD; GUMPTION; WHEEL YO BELLY; DON MAN; REGGAE BURDEN. (39:33 minutes)

Personnel: Wailer, vocals; Chris Meridith, Danny Brownie, drums; Robbie Shakespeare, bass; Owen Stewart, rhythm guitar, keyboards, horn programming; Danny Thompson, bass, lead guitar; Harry I, percussion; Psalms, backing vocals.

★ ★ ★ ★

SLY & ROBBIE

SLY & ROBBIE PRESENT . . . DJ RIOT—Mango 539 887-2: MINIMUM WAGES; WINE & GO DOWN; ONE BURNER; HEY GIRL; LOOK LIKE ME; SRD; WHO TEST; JUDGEMENT DAY; LOVE MOTION; RAGGAMUFFIN; NOTHING LIKE THAT; WANNA PARTY. (45:58)

Personnel: Sly Dunbar, drums; Robbie Shakespeare, bass; Flourgon (cuts 1, 12), Red Dragon (2), Daddy Lizzard (3, 12), Commando Shad (4, 9), Tiger (5, 10), Shaka Demus (7), Trinity (8), Dominic (11), Red Rose (12), vocals.

★ ★ ★ ½

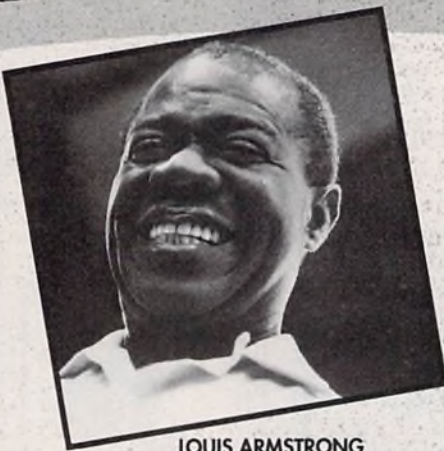
There's a temptation to dismiss reggae as a monotonous musical genre. It's true that low-grade reggae bands entrench themselves in a methodical beat that makes for a weary listen. And it's also a given that many pop acts throw in the perfunctory reggae-flavored tune or two on their albums in an attempt to spice up the mix. Results? Trashy stuff that is devoid of the essential emotion and edge that has made reggae music from its early ska days a vibrant form. Remedy to mediocrity? Consult the roots riddem masters. New releases by the legendary Bunny Wailer and the ubiquitous Sly & Robbie are worth a listen as a confirmation that reggae, as Wailer sings, still has the "rankin' soundz."

Wailer's dancehall reggae is everything the title of his album suggests. The songs on *Gumption* are aggressive, spunky, and full of common sense shrewdness. An original Wailer with Bob Marley and Peter Tosh, Bunny challenges roots rockers to singing competitions for the reggae crown, appropriates a Toots & the Maytals tune to register his vote for liberation politics, skips into a Johnny Osbourne (of the Sensations) number to sing an anti-war anthem, and commits his reggae to helping the Jah-brotherhood in the raggamuffin ghettos. The songs are melodically impeccable (lots of fresh hooks in the choruses), Wailer's vocals are sweet and entrancing, the bubbling percussion is multi-textured, and there are a variety of tempos from a straightahead reggae

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rhythm that creates a floating quality to the bouncy dancehall ska rhythms. Strong outing overall for Wailer.

Sly & Robbie's album is less polished than Wailer's and actually has more gumption in its gritty, street-wise numbers. The famed production duo hit Jamaica's dancehalls and rounded up nine club DJs to strut their stuff in this compilation album. Sly's drumming peppers the tunes and Robbie's thumping bass provides the rhythmic undergirding necessary for the DJs to rap/sing their politics, Jah praises, and sexual attractions. Highlights are Flourgon's complaint on the rich/poor disparity, Dominic's strident chant against U.S. imperi-

alism in Latin America and the Caribbean, and Tiger's raspy, raw, almost out-of-control vocals.

Despite the large number of DJs contributing, there isn't an abundance of stylistic diversity. Sly & Robbie do bring alive the kinship of reggae to rap and make connections to the hip-hop world. While several songs feature sampling in the mix, James Brown's "I Feel Good" is sampled to death in "Wanna Dance." Another shortcoming: the "riddem twins" apply identical rhythm tracks to a couple different numbers. The DJs deserve the attention for the vocal acrobatics, but none is as captivating a singer as Wailer. (both reviewed on CD)

—Dan Ouellette



SHIRLEY HORN

YOU WON'T FORGET ME—Verve 847 482-4:
HIS IS THE ONLY MUSIC THAT MAKES ME DANCE; COME DANCE WITH ME; DON'T LET THE SUN CATCH YOU CRYIN'; BEAUTIFUL LOVE; COME BACK TO ME; TOO LATE NOW; I JUST FOUND OUT ABOUT LOVE; IT HAD TO BE YOU; SOOTHE ME; FOOLIN' MYSELF; IF YOU GO; YOU STEPPED OUT OF A DREAM; YOU WON'T FORGET ME; ALL MY TOMORROWS.

Personnel: Horn, vocals, piano; Charles Ables, Buster Williams (cuts 5, 10, 12), bass; Steve Williams, Billy Hart (5, 10, 12), drums; Wynton Marsalis (3), Miles Davis (13), trumpet; Branford Marsalis (8), Buck Hill (10), tenor saxophone; Toots Thielemans, harmonica (4, 9), guitar (4, 12).

★ ★ ★ ½

Shirley Horn is finally getting some long overdue recognition. Here she gives us more of her sparse, moody style, with appearances by "the men in her life." My only objection is the presence of too many rubato and very slow tempos. This lady can swing, too, and that's why "I Just Found Out About Love" and "Foolin' Myself," to name two, score solidly.

Seeing Miles' name in the personnel, you will naturally wonder how he sounds after 20-plus years in the funk. And the answer is, basically intact: muted, pithy, tasteful, as in the '50s. Horn's comping is part of it, too; she almost reads his mind.

I first heard Horn at the Showboat Lounge in Washington, her hometown, sometime in the mid-'60s—I imagined I was hearing Miles in her voice and Bill Evans in her piano. It was a matter of melancholy. "Too Late Now" and "If You Go" represent this moody side of her personality: minimalism, nuances, and sexy timbre at work. Similarly, "It Had To Be You" oozes, as Branford exercises admirable restraint in a Ben Webster-like tone parallel.

In fact, there's not a mismatch among the Horn-men, although I find Toots' harmonica more satisfying than his guitar. The harmonica exudes a sad, lonely, blues-in-the-night quality on "Beautiful Love" and "Soothe Me." But his guitar (if indeed it is his on cut 12—no credit is listed) isn't nearly as special. Hill, who appeared on *Close Enough For Love*, Horn's previous album, complements by contrast (his bold, declamatory tenor to her subtle voice) on "Foolin' Myself." Wynton, on the other hand, seems an extension of Horn on "Don't Let The Sun Catch You Cryin'." (Horn, by the way, sings a couple of tunes on the trumpeter's latest album, the soundtrack to *Tune In Tomorrow*.)

No one should cry about the national exposure Horn is getting with what is, after all, an introverted approach. Thankfully, she's holding her ground, refusing to tamper with a good thing. (reviewed on cassette) —Owen Cordle

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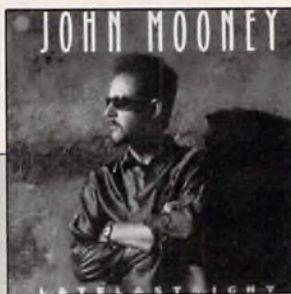
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JOHN MOONEY

LATE LAST NIGHT—Bullseye Blues/Rounder CD BB 9505: *LATE LAST NIGHT*; *RIP*; *COUNTRY GAL*; *BABY PLEASE DON'T GO*; *TRAVELIN' ON*; *LOVIN' MOOD*; *IT DON'T MATTER*; *OUT THAT DOOR*; *LATE ON IN THE EVENING*; *COMA MAMA*; *COUNTRY BOY*. (38:37)

Personnel: Mooney, guitar, slide guitar, vocals, piano (cut 6); John Cleary, piano, Hammond B-3 organ; David Ranson, bass; Kenneth Blevins, drums, tambourine.

★ ★ ★ ½

Since the early days of slide guitar at the turn of the century, the slide has been used to approximate the human voice with its syllabic sustain, intonation, and nuance. With guitarist John Mooney, the slide legacy of such first-generation blues guitarists as Charlie Patton, Robert Johnson, and Son House is in capable

hands. Mooney studied under the abovementioned House years ago. Judging by his latest release, Mooney has not only mastered his mentor's expressive Delta blues, he's impressively melded country slide stylings with the r&b vibrancy of his adopted New Orleans.

The spotlight is on Mooney's work throughout. This is most evident on the well-rendered blues classic, "Baby Please Don't Go," where Mooney's slide cautiously slithers, and the soulful, melancholy "Late Last Night," where the slide weeps. Meanwhile, bandmate John Cleary's fine Hammond organ playing is only faintly detected in the mix. Not that the band has been silenced. It gets plenty of action, especially on the raucous "Country Gal" (drummer Kenneth Blevins rumbles and propels the tune into the cooker zone) and the downright funky "Out That Door" (Cleary dazzles on piano).

The lyrics are standard blues with stories of trains, backroads, whiskey, and the comings and goings (mostly the latter) of love. Mooney gives his songs an impassioned reading with his roughhewn and smoky vocals. But where he's best at unleashing emotions is on his slide. He dips and glides with it, snarling and whining on a cold-molasses slow number, stinging quick jabs on a gutsy tune like "Lovin' Mood," and seasoning the uptempo tunes such as "It Don't Matter" and "Country Boy" with spicy licks. Overall, not a lot of flashiness in Mooney's slide work, but a plenitude of passion. (reviewed on CD) —*Dan Ouellette*



ALEX ACUNA

ALEX ACUNA AND THE UNKNOWNNS—JVC JD-3322: *TE A MO*; *JOE'S RED EYE*; *MARIONETTES*; *HOPPIN' IT*; *NICE*; *COCHO SAN*; *VAN NUYS JAM*; *THINKING OF YOU (PENSANDO EN TI)*; *PSALMS*; *TEN O'CLOCK GROOVE*. (44:28)

Personnel: Acuna, drums, percussion, vocals; Efrain Toro, programming, percussion, drums; Otmaro Ruiz, Lou Pardini, keyboards, vocals; Pedro Eustache, flute, wind synthesizer; Ramon Stagnaro, Carlos Santana, guitars; John Pena, Abe Laboriel, bass; Cocho Arbe, keyboards; Diana Acuna, Tiki, Dante Young, vocals; Brandon Fields, saxophone; Danilo Lozano, flute; Paulinho da Costa, Luis Conte, Michito Sanchez, Rudy Regalado, percussion.

★ ★ ★ ½

Acuna comes with great credentials—the Unknownns are a less-proven commodity. Alex's

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"independence" as a percussionist is legendary—he can play trap set with one stick and slap congas in time with his other hand, sounding like two excellent players. This record was highly anticipated because everything Acuna touches seems to get better.

Maybe I was expecting more of the remarkable drumming flair to come through on Acuna's first release as a leader, but he obviously had no intention of going in and showing off his musical chops. As a musical statement, it is quite solid, if not groundbreaking. His drum fills make all the sense in the world. The

Peruvian-born Acuna has absorbed influences worldwide—even hip-hop, as demonstrated on "Hoppin' It." With hi-tech effects all around and the chance to break it wide open on a drum fill, Acuna plays it strong and simple; and in the context, it just *kills*.

Not unlike Koinonia, with whom he's recorded, AA & The Unknowns keep the emphasis on melody and groove. "Te A Mo" gets things off to a smoking start, with a joyously leaping montuno bass line. The synth sounds are a bit dated on "Joe's Red Eye," but an excellent acoustic guitar solo by Ramon Stag-

GLOBAL WARMING

by Jon Andrews

After the buzz and hype of the last few years (remember lambada?), a little skepticism about world music is justified. But in times of retrenchment, musical conservatism, and other retro tendencies, you must take inspiration where you can find it. There are no low-tech field recordings here, no trends, pop contrivances, or cultural imperialists, just instrumental virtuosity with traditional themes and a postmodern spin or two.

Passages, a partnership between **Ravi Shankar** and **Philip Glass** (Private Music 2074-2-P; 55:50: ★★), reunites two composers on the far fringes of the classical music establishment. Glass acknowledges that his cyclical structures owe a debt to the raga form which Shankar popularized. In this collaboration, each man arranged finished pieces for his own ensemble, based on themes supplied by the other. This synergy works perfectly on the lyrical, exotic "Offering" and "Sadhanipa," though less successfully when Glass' relentless rhythms threaten to overwhelm Shankar's delicate melodies. Shankar's orchestral "Prashanti" is among his most ambitious raga-based works. Shankar offers warmth and emotion to offset Glass' metronomic precision. Glass' participation puts Shankar's music in the hands and ears of new audiences. That's symbiosis for you.

L. Shankar's Pancha Nadai Pallavi (ECM 1407; 59:54: ★★) reunites the Indian violinist (yes, they're related) with percussionists Zakir Hussain and Vikku Vinayakram from the Indian/jazz fusion quartet Shakti. This is a more traditional setting, with two ragas, one fast, one slow, in line with Shankar's "serious" albums (*Who's To Know* and *Nobody Told Me*). An unaccompanied "alap" section of the raga sets serpentine melodies from Shankar's double violin against drone textures. The "sympathetic" overtones and "singing" of the double violin blend in an expressive, mesmerizing performance. The pace picks up once Hussain's tabla joins in. Hussain pushes Shankar like no one else can; he's the Max Roach of the subcontinent.

Dispensing with frills and compromises, this is Shankar's best recorded work in years.

Brian Keane & Omar Faruk Tekbilek's Fire Dance (Celestial Harmonies 13032; 65:07: ★★) explores Middle Eastern music. Tekbilek is a revelation here, playing reeds (flute and nay), string instruments (guitar and oud), hand drums and synthesizers, all with agility and feeling. Keane contributes acoustic guitar leads and an acute producer's sensitivity to the spirit of this music. Reminiscent of Peter Gabriel's landmark *Passion* recording, *Fire Dance* makes a great introduction to music from the Middle East, North Africa, and Turkey. The dances, "Fire Dance," "Halay," and "Beledi," are exhilarating, buoyant tunes to charm snakes and make dervishes whirl. You'll feel you're in a tent with dancing girls and a hookah. Or in a convenience store.

Yuan, meaning "to be far away," is the work of the **Guo Brothers and Shung Tian** (Real World 91345-2; 44:50: ★★½), an intimate group of Chinese musicians raised during the Cultural Revolution. The brothers, Guo Yue and Guo Yi, play flutes and bamboo mouth-blown organ (the "sheng") respectively, and trade solos and leads. The Shung Tian ensemble includes Chinese harps, dulcimers, oboe, percussion, and unobtrusive synthesizer. The music is based on traditional songs and dances, and can be quiet and romantic or surprisingly lean and aggressive. Other Guo family members are part of Shung Tian, so you can never be certain of what Guo's on.

When Agent Cooper dreams of Tibet, he hears **David Parsons' Yatra** (Fortuna 18072; 60:23/63:20: ★★). A New Zealand-based synthesist, Parsons has studied Tibetan music on-site, even producing an album of monastic chants. On *Yatra* (Sanskrit for "journey"), Parsons mixes his recordings of indigenous music and environmental sounds into original compositions. The first disc builds on earthy rhythms and sounds (the marketplace, religious devotions, etc.), adding sampled percussion. The second disc leaves worldly concerns (and rhythms) behind, contemplating the ether of Tibetan spirituality through extended trance pieces. One CD of this material, with its feet on the ground and its head in the clouds, would have satisfied most listeners. (all reviewed on CD) **DB**

hat — expect the unexpected



A STATEMENT RE: THE VAO

"Painting is seen, or read, when its intensity forces us to participate in the illusion and in a dialogue with a world where the beautiful and the ugly, the common and absurd are indivisible — a world in which history, fantasy and reality, dream and memory are inseparable..." Terry Conway was speaking of his own aesthetic of painting in this statement, but if we substitute "music" for "painting" it serves as well to highlight the confrontational immediacy of Mathias Rügge's compositions.

Too often, jazz composition exists as a "habit of recognition," revisiting familiar territory or borrowing traits that are in the common repertory. Rügge rebels against convention; he is both a satirist, puncturing the inflated propositions of the past, and visionary, suggesting new possibilities. Two of his hat Art productions — **From No Time To Rag Time** (hat ART CD 60**) and **The Minimalism Of Erik Satie** (hat ART CD 6024) — are specific attempts to undermine our complaisant responses to familiar material. But scattered throughout the other three collections — **Concerto Piccolo** (hat ART CD 6038), **Suite For The Green Eighties** (hat ART CD 6054), and **Perpetuum Mobile** (hat ART CD 60**) — are pieces which prove insidious to our understanding of, on the surface, jazz and, deeper, community.

As leader of the Vienna Art Orchestra, Rügge's writing defines the ensemble's intent; the members of the VAO in turn give body and breath to his conceptions. His scores, expansive and exhilarating, exult in a rainbow's complexity ... of color, and transparency ... of reference, and juxtaposition ... of form, and freedom. The musicians find shifting contexts for their individual offerings, and are challenged no less than is the listener. This is the nature of confrontation, and the lovely illogic of music, where such new combinations of sounds suggest new attitudes, new fantasies, new realities.

— Art Lange
May 1990

** CD-RELEASES IN PREPARATION

hat ART: A WORK IN PROGRESS

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naro makes sure there's more happening than in your average pop-jazz.

"Nice" is a good horn feature for Pedro Eustache with a drum break, vocal chants, and a rock & roll guitar solo. Sounds like Azteca 1991, doesn't it? A percussion solo number, "Van Nuys Jam," is masterfully done. The leader makes the drums dance. He plays with great finesse, and equal power where it's appropriate.

Guest star Carlos Santana never really lets loose. He spends much of the time answering vocal lines and "playing off" the other sounds around him. Acuna could have filled the album up with other big stars he's worked with, but it's refreshing to hear "The Unknowns." (reviewed on CD)
—Robin Tolleson



DEWEY REDMAN

LIVING ON THE EDGE—Black Saint 120123-2: BOO BOODOOP; MIRROR WINDOWS; BLUES FOR J.A.M.—PART I; IF I SHOULD LOSE YOU; AS ONE; LAZY BIRD. (44:45)

Personnel: Redman, alto and tenor saxophones; Geri Allen, piano; Cameron Brown, bass; Eddie Moore.

★ ★ ★ ★

OLD AND NEW DREAMS

A TRIBUTE TO BLACKWELL—Black Saint 120113-2: HAPPY HOUSE; LAW YEARS; TOGO; DEWEY'S TUNE; STREET WOMAN. (47:20)

Personnel: Don Cherry, trumpet, piano; Dewey Redman, tenor saxophone; Charlie Haden, bass; Ed Blackwell, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

A *Tribute To Blackwell*, recorded at the 1987 Ed Blackwell Festival in Atlanta, is also a tribute to Blackwell's galvanizing impact on Ornette Coleman's music—it's no coincidence that this salute is 60 percent Ornette compositions. This energetic set is yet another apostolic reminder that the phrase is the kernel of pulse in Ornette's harmolodic music, and a case in point of how Blackwell both anchors and liberates the rhythmic flow of Ornette's music with, of all things, rudiments.

Although the program contains only one "new dream," Dewey Redman's sketchy, catchy, overtly Ornettish "Dewey's Tune," the tribute setting at least pumps new effervescence into such revisited material as Ornette's bubbly "Happy House." Appropriately, a crisp rereading of Blackwell's "Togo," a Gambian-hued showcase for the master drummer, is the program's centerpiece. The emphasis on

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Blackwell's patented pulse and the absence of aching ballads and wrenching dirges—which are perhaps being saved for the Charlie Haden celebration—give the program a brisk pace. But this is Blackwell's and *Tribute* is spirited and lively.

Living On The Edge is another confirmation of Dewey Redman's artistic breadth; but, like most of his recordings, the well-versed readings of jazz standards and the soulful venting of his Texas roots merely co-exist with his more adventurous statements, rather than melding into a synergized whole. There is a distracting quantum leap from track to track on *Living On The Edge*. The spirited freebop of "Boo Boo-doop" and the gutty "Blues For J.A.M." could have initiated considerable momentum if the blustery groundswells of "Mirror Windows" hadn't been inserted between them. The same can be said for sticking the fragmentary, though engaging "As One" between the two lilted standards.

Geri Allen, who gives ubiquity a good name, is the promising new element in the formula, taking a more collaborative role than her predecessors, co-arranging the standards and prodding Redman on the duet, "As One." Her ability to be both angular yet lyrical, and forceful yet supple, makes her the perfect pianist for Redman. But, the star-bound trajectory of her career may preclude a close, long-term association. (reviewed on CD)

—Bill Shoemaker



BRAVE COMBO

A NIGHT ON EARTH—Rounder CD 9029: *A NIGHT ON EARTH; DON'T EVER DANCE WITH MARIA; HORA BIALIK; DO SOMETHING DIFFERENT; TWO MARYS; DULCECITA; JEALOUSY; LAURA; WHAT IS THIS DARKNESS?; ITALIAN MEDLEY #1; ITALIAN MEDLEY #2; HEY THERE; LINDA GUERITA; SAXOPHONE, WHY DO YOU WEEP?* (38:13)

Personnel: Jeffrey Barnes, horns, vocals; Carl Finch, guitar, accordion, keyboards, vocals; Bubba Hernandez, bass, tuba, vocals; Mitch Marine, drums, percussion; Mark Praither, trumpet (cut 4); Mike Dillon (11-14), Joe Cripps (8), percussion.

★ ★ ★ ½

The blazing polka "Do Something Different" says it all in describing Brave Combo's latest: "Never ever ever do what's proper again . . ."

rid yourself of fashion/ . . . Turn off your radio, quit your job/Do something different, disappear." This album is all about marching to a different drummer—i.e., waltzing to an exotic 3/4 time, Eastern European dance form called oberek, rocking to a unique blend of rock and Mexican rumba, listening with new ears to unexpected musical combinations. The group is an eclectic music programmer's dream. On this CD alone you get two medleys of Italian polkas, a c&w two-step, a tango, cumbia, choro, and hora, not to mention a Broadway cha-cha once covered by Peggy Lee.

Best pieces are the abovementioned "Do Something Different," the exhilarating polkas (the Combo's forte in this reviewer's opinion), the killer cumbia "Linda Guerita," the sexy cha-cha "Laura," and the exquisite tango, "Jealousy." Despite its encyclopedic quality, this album is not as surprising musically as past efforts. It's partly because Brave Combo is not as uncommon a phenomenon as it was in its *Polkatharsis* days. Another factor is that the song material isn't as strong or as catchy as earlier albums. Then again, perhaps the novelty of listening to musical chameleons has worn thin. Maybe we've come to expect too much of the unexpected from Carl Finch & Co. Nonetheless, as the band's name suggests, this is courageous stuff—not for the mainstream listener and definitely not for those who lack a sense of humor. (reviewed on CD)

—Dan Ouellette

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record & cd reviews

PIANO CARAVAN

by Fred Bouchard

A series of solo grand piano recitals, recorded at Maybeck Hall in Berkeley, California by the enterprising Concord Jazz label, points to the universality and timelessness of solo piano. Playing a nine-foot concert Yamaha, the pianists are an eclectic bunch, the music sublime. Audience climate in this picturebook setting measures halfway between a concert-hall formality and jazz-club intimacy the players take in stride.

I'll categorically rate this inspired series (more to come) the full ★★★★★, rather than mince half-stars in this august company. Each is a superb pianist and individualist, each has assembled a provocative, well-paced set, each performs with inspiration and delight.

JoAnne Brackeen (*Volume I*; CCD-4409; 63:11) first requested this setting, this piano, to record; she seems to welcome a chance to soften her edges and tone down her thorny originals, like her cubist portrait of "Dr. Chu Chow" (redrawn with strings in 1989 at New England Conservatory). Yet her set is in some ways the most exuberant and intense, played with barely controlled abandon, high dynamics, and her restless, relentless energy. Though she selects more standards than is her wont

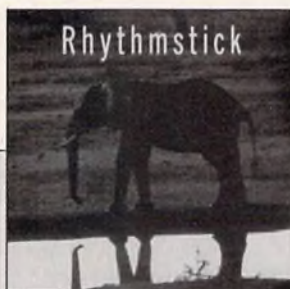


CHARLES REILLY

Junior Mance: diamond in the rough

(seven of 11), Brackeen stamps them so firmly with her quixotic derring-do that she breaks the mold. Did you ever meet such a robust, healthy "Most Beautiful Girl In The World"?

Dave McKenna (*Volume II*; CCD-4410; 65:38) has played duos at Maybeck with Marian McPartland, and is scheduled to play more with Walter Norris. This rough poet blends from his rich mine of pop-song arcana the ethereal ("Dream Dancing" glides like Astaire) with the profane (a rumbunctious, headlong "Exactly Like You"), sometimes the profound (one of his ruminative, *recherché*, patented medleys), often both in one deep breath ("De-tour Ahead"). Here McKenna restrains his ex-



VARIOUS ARTISTS

RHYTHMSTICK—CTI 847 199-2: *CARIBE*; *FRIDAY NIGHT AT THE CADILLAC CLUB*; *QUILOMBO*; *BARBADOS*; *WAITING FOR ANGELA*; *NANA*; *SOFTLY AS IN A MORNING SUNRISE*; *COLO DE RIO*; *PALISADES IN BLUE*; *WAMBA*. (60:21)

Personnel: on various cuts: Dizzy Gillespie, trumpet, rhythmstick; Art Farmer, trumpet, flugelhorn; Randy Brecker, Jon Faddis, trumpet; Phil Woods, alto sax; Bob Berg, tenor sax, soprano sax; John Scofield, Robben Ford, Romero Lubambo, guitar; Hilton Ruiz, piano; Jim Beard, synthesizer, organ; Jimmy McGriff, organ; Anthony Jackson, electric bass; Charlie Haden, bass; Benny Galson, synthesized bass; Marvin "Smitty" Smith, Bernard Purdie, drums; Airtio, percussion, drums, vocals; Tito Puente, percussion; Flora Purim, Amy Roslyn, Janice Pendarvis, Diana Moreira, vocals.

★ ★ ★ ½

This album is supposed to represent Gillespie's impact on jazz. Rhythmstick is the name given

to his percussion instrument made from a stick and bottle caps. When Creed Taylor envisioned this tribute, he primarily looked at Dizzy's fusion of Afro-Latin and jazz rhythms. Actually, Dizzy plays only on the first and last tracks. The rest are given over to his musical children and stylistic associates.

As a concept album, *Rhythmstick* hangs together from an Afro-Latin-jazz perspective, but if you heard any of the tracks without Dizzy you wouldn't immediately associate him with them. Individually each performance is good, but taken together they are a mixed bag, with the emphasis on hot over cool.

The soloists, a disparate lot, follow one another with regard to energy more than melodic or stylistic continuity. Indeed, it sounds as if the bunch of leaders here got together and made an all-star date. On the other hand, it sounds as if Taylor has shaped things by the standards of his many CTI records of the '70s: sterling rhythm sections, contemporary jazz instruments (in this case, synthesizer), fleshed out beginnings and endings and interludes. All this adds up to ambivalence for a reviewer: the album is hot when it's happening, but it doesn't necessarily call you back for more.

Highlights include Berg's r&b-tinged "Friday Night" which coaxes the normally reserved Farmer to raise the temperature a bit; Horta's "Waiting For Angela," a ballad sung by Purim (who also wrote the lyrics and is a hit throughout the album); a pair of solo features, Bird's "Barbados" (swung by Woods) and the standard "Softly . . ." (etched by Farmer); and "Wamba," the finale, where you can hear Dizzy's rhythmstick briefly. (reviewed on CD)

—Owen Cordle

uberant goliath left hand, and spit-shines kid-leather oldies with affection and pride.

On *Music Of 1937, Volume III* (CCD-4411; 55:22), **Dick Hyman** focuses his art and wisdom on the repertoire of one golden year of Tin Pan Alley. Far from pedantry, this set is revelatory, scholarly, elegant fun. Few pianists master any classic styles nowadays, much less make relevant extensions of them, as Hyman does time and again during his happy hour. He hand-culls bygone beauties and re-writes history in clever, momentous retellings. In his hands, "Bei Mir Bist Du Schon" becomes a Yiddish sonatina, "Loch Lomond" a lilting boogie; he transforms dull "My Funny Valentine" into a fresh experience; brightens "A Foggy Day," "Caravan" a madcap stride à la Meade Lux Lewis and Duke, as well as Dick. Overseeing all is Hyman's droll intelligence.

For *Volume IV* (CCD-4412; 65:53), there is **Walter Norris**, a consummate pianist and deep rhapsodist whom the Japanese, in their reverence for artistry, would call a "living national treasure." Except for a few Enja sides, this Ozark son has hid out in Germany these dozen years. Norris mines his rich mother lode of strangely modal lyricism and refined ruminations on standards. These elliptical interpretations breathe a new, higher life into old, familiar tunes. His "Darn That Dream" is a cloud ride that never alights; "Round Midnight" amazed my ears with its fresh perspective. He's mellowed aplenty since his seminal work as Ornette Coleman's only regular pianist

(1958). What a rediscovery!

Stanley Cowell gives the fifth Maybeck offering (*Volume V*; CCD-4413; 64:11) a jolly walk on the wild side of jazz classics with brisk levity and panache. He compresses 14 pieces into a headlong set, but none come up short: he may madly modalize "Softly" for attention, stomp "Savoy," trillify "Jitterbug," 5/4 "Stella," roar for "Cal Massey," and salsify "Autumn Leaves," but a leafy "Lament," purred "Nefer-titi," and his own warm "Little Sunny" bring peace and satisfaction. Roars from the Maybeck guests indicate pleasure.

Other recently released solo piano outings from players in the bebop tradition include, among others that follow, **Dick Twardzik**. No household name even during his brief flame of fame (1952-55), this Boston-born pianist was considered by peers and bandmates—Serge Chaloff, Charlie Mariano, Herb Pomeroy—a *wunderkind* who had assimilated advanced bebop harmonies and rekindled them with vigor and abandon. These 11 solo sketches and trio track (1954 *Improvisations*; New Artists 1006CD; 41:07; ★★☆☆), recorded months before he joined Chet Baker's Quartet, show a witty, quixotic, highly inventive approach to standards that etch themselves on the listener's consciousness despite amateurish taping and out-of-tune piano. Twardzik absorbed bebop's harmonic innovations—different ones from, say, Tristano—and joyously refracted them through his strange, wild-eyed, fun-house mirror. This unexpected addition to

a tiny, pungent legacy is as rare as Twardzik's mind. (P.O. Box 549, New York, NY 10018)

Speaking of Tristano, pianist **Connie Crothers** has been one of the handful of faithful who plod in the master's deep footsteps. Her solo *Concert At Cooper Union* (New Artists 1002CD; 62:02; ★★☆☆) is a hardy hour of deliberate ruminations on standards and originals. Crothers places great emphasis on her walking bass and cuts right-hand lines with unusual force: her solo interpretations of standards strike forcefully, more like woodcuts than pencil or pastel sketches.

Sal Mosca, another veteran Tristianian, airs his nervous, giddily flickering remakes of back-water bop on the simply-titled, exhaustingly played *A Concert* (Jazz JR-8CD; 75:15; ★★☆☆½), recorded in 6/79 when he was 52, shortly after long stints with Lee Konitz. Of 17 tracks, he credits three brief non-originals: Ellington's "Prelude To A Kiss" and guru Tristano's "Lennie Bird" and "Dreams." But album and concept, à la Tristano, are reconstructed standards: "Co-Play" sounds built on the chords of "Sweet And Lovely," "Pay Line" on "Lover Come Back To Me," "All Of It" a fragmented "Body And Soul." A few notes added to the totally bare cover might have instructed curious listeners. Mosca rolls out lockhand madness ("Dreams"), tennis-ball basslines (Cherokeean "Bio-Express"), a rhapsodic filligree If-I-Had-You-ian "Bits Of Wits." He plays with fervor and fun; his time is wild; he strums and gracenotes like a mandolinist; sometimes

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record & cd reviews

he tracks onto wobbly, grassy sidings like Fatha Hines.

Other sides in the kit bag this month include **Junior Mance**, a good ole homeboy from sweet home Chicago, who does a roots trip on his diamond-in-the-rough *Mance's Special* (Sackville CD 2-3043; 59:48: ★★). His daddy may well have learned his boogie woogie from Jimmy Yancey; Mance kicks off

with Meade Lux Lewis' bouncy tribute, "Yancey Special." Tasty tunes get steeped (but not drenched) in Junior's bluesy liquor—Ellington, Billy Taylor, and Ivory Joe Hunter.

Tony Zano's *Instantaneous Excursions: Volume 1* (Mark MJS 57633: ★★) are eight medium-length tracks (three standards, five originals) full of bounce, bubble, and broken-field running. Zano keeps his music busy, up-

DEAN'S LIST

by Kevin Whitehead

Writers call **Dean Benedetti's** recordings of **Charlie Parker** the jazz world's answer to the Holy Grail. (If you're new to the planet, see **DB** Dec. '90.) *The Complete Dean Benedetti Recordings of Charlie Parker* (Mosaic MD7-129; 7 hours, 12 minutes: ★★★★★½—35 Melrose Place, Stamford, CT 06902) have now arrived, and every hardcore jazz fan will have to have them, period—even if they don't contain any amazing revelations. Bird's career has been so extensively documented, there may not be much these '47-'48 live recordings could add to what we know. (Hearing them is a bit like finding the Holy Grail and discovering you have some drinking cups at home just like it.) But there's some superb Bird here, and the sound quality of much of it exceeds all expectations. True, the paper-based tape recordings from New York's Onyx—made with a mic stuck through a hole drilled in the stage—are bass-boomy, badly distorted. But as resuscitated for the box, Dean's L.A. disc recordings are disarmingly clear.

Also impressive is the way annotator/co-producer Phil Schaap has pieced together so much about Benedetti's activities from interviews with accomplices and from close listening to the music. Schaap asks questions like: On March 8, 1947, did Benedetti fail to tape most of Bird's last set at the Hi-De-Ho club because he was busy moving his equipment to his usual booth up front, from the back of the room, where he'd been sitting earlier? He takes up as much space as this review speculating about the identity of a mysterious intermission pianist Bird introduces one night.

On the minus side, these hundreds of solos, scraps, and fragments are not laid out in strict chronological order. Along with the cumbersome cataloguing system, that makes it frustratingly hard to locate a particular bit of music. But as a bonus, the box includes a sample of recordings Dean made of himself—piano or solo alto noodlings; an audio letter in Italian. On one section, he plays along with solos on some Charlie Parker records. Strangely, there appears to have been little direct contact between Benedetti and his idol. But on those synthetic duets—Dean shadowing Bird's moves, fittingly enough—the two enjoy a symbolic meeting on common ground. (reviewed on CD)

DB

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tempo, rhythmically plain, and rushed; like dining with garrulous friends, you wish he'd leave spaces between sound-bites. At times he meanders, woolgathering, just lets the notes dribble from facile fingers, without a lot of thought or care to execution. Yet he is a performer: you sense some shape and drama to his tunes. (reviewed on LP)

George McFetridge (*Solo Piano*; Unity 108: ★★½) has an easy, loose way with a piano; not too bony, but limber, playful. He owes more Euro than Afro dues, though "That's The Way It Is" comes on easy like Hoagy Carmichael or Mose Allison. He moves around chords with dynamic variety, mixes unison lines, and may indulge in noodling vagaries. Though witty and occasionally wise, McFetridge's irresolute tends to float ideas in bits. Pieces sort of start and end, that sort of thing. Even "New Day," his slightly energetic closer, with a wisp of "The Best Thing For You" in it, builds no heads of steam, dynamically or conceptually. (reviewed on LP)

Charles Coleridge "**Red**" **Richards** brings more bounce to the ounce on his *Lullaby In Rhythm* (Sackville CD2-3044; 47:18: ★★★) than any pianist I've heard since Fatha Hines. Red's a tonic, alright, rattling through 10 standards with vim and vitality. His set gives Hyman's a run for the money for history: his average vintage may be earlier than 1937. Red has a lift to his step, a lilt to his tunes, and a marlinspike in his "Hot Toddy." (all reviewed on CD except where noted) **DB**



3 MUSTAPHAS 3

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Personnel: Niaveti Mustapha 3rd, flute, ney, kaval, bagpipes, zurna, bombarde, piano, button accordions; Daoudi Mustapha, alto, tenor and baritone saxes, clarinets; Sabah Habas Mustapha, electric bass guitar, bass fiddle, vocals; Hijaz Mustapha, bouzouki, violin, cumbus, banjo, hawaiian guitar, electric guitar; Houzam Mustapha, drums, bendir; Kemo "Kem Kem" Mustapha, piano, accordion, kaval, daira, synthe, qifteli; Lavra Timo Doviz M, vocals (cut 10).

★ ★ ★ ½

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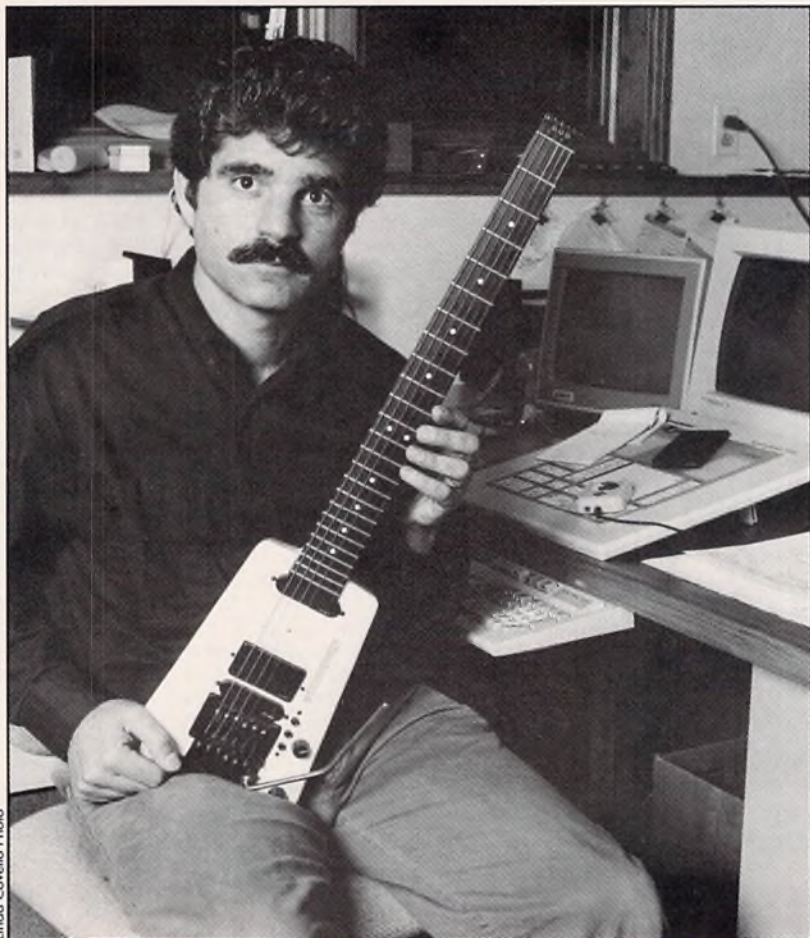
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record & cd reviews

Is this a joke, or what? Mythical band with fake names from the mythical town of Szegeerly playing music that is neither here nor there but is in fact from everywhere. Cultures collide when the Mustaphas take the stage. Their slogan: Forward in all directions.

That's a pretty apt description of their recipe for this savory world-music stew. And yet, it doesn't begin to convey the dazzling array of flavorful sounds on *Soup Of The Century*. To cook this spicy *Soup*, combine Tex-Mex two steps with Hindi vocals ("This City Is Very Exciting!"), western swing with bouzoukis and Japanese lyrics ("Soba Song"). Throw in a few Bulgarian ballads, some Balkan basslines, a couple of Hawaiian guitar licks, and several West African riffs. Stir intensely, serve at a loud volume.

This kind of around-the-world-in-a-daze approach is bound to leave some listeners wondering which country they're in from song to song. And while the overall effect can be somewhat disorienting, there's no denying the Mustaphas' musicianship. They may be a tad too self-consciously clever, a touch too much tongue-in-cheek, but they're obviously knowledgeable musicologists and talented multi-instrumentalists, whoever they are.

The Marx Brothers meet Brave Combo and Ivo Papasov's Bulgarian Wedding Band somewhere between Cameroon and Casablanca. (reviewed on CD)

—Bill Milkowski

4039: *TROUBLE*; *SHE WANTS MONEY*; *DISHRAG*; *GOODBYE TO LOVE*; *DON'T CRY BABY*; *MIDNIGHT TIL MORNING*; *MR. GOOD THING*; *WAY DOWN THE LINE*; *RUNNING FROM TROUBLE*; *JOHNNY AND JANIE*. (44:33)

Personnel: Sansone, vocals, harmonica, rub-board; Bob Greenlee, bass guitar, baritone sax; Ernie Lancaster, Bryan Bassett, Kenny Neal, guitar; Lucky Peterson, keyboards; Reverend Billy C. Wirtz, piano; Jim Payne, drums; Bill Samuel, tenor and baritone sax; Sylvester Polk, trumpet; C. J. Chenier, accordion, background vocals (2); Yvonne Jackson, lead vocals (4), background vocals; Vyki Z. Walls, background vocals.

★ ★ ★

Some of the more agreeable contemporary blues to be heard comes from little-known journeymen who synthesize r&b, soul, rock, and 12-bar devices with a resolve speaking of their self-intoxication in making music. Jumpin' Johnny Sansone & the Blues Party and the gang known as the Mellow Fellows, respectively, give the lie to the notion that blues lacking pop-chart action is spent and deserving of obscurity.

New Orleanians value Sansone, whose voice and harmonica light up the Maple Leaf Bar and nearby frolic pads. (The Crescent City's never been a cradle of reed-bending, but Sansone and Rockin' Jake and J. Monque'D are doing well, thanks.) On *Mr. Good Thing*, the New Jersey native lets loose with eight originals and two covers that flaunt central Florida producer Bob Greenlee's soul stable—Lucky Peterson organ waves, no-nonsense bass and drums, red clay-caked King Snake Horns, tasty guitar.

Throughout the program, Sansone's mouth organ, hinting of Big and Little Walter, gasps and gushes with the stuff of character; his solos are arresting in their construction, and his tone, inflection, and dynamics serve a range of persuasive moods. While not of stirring mettle, Sansone's voice is an adequate-plus conveyor of lyrics concerned with the usual r&b concerns. Non-original "Trouble" is the keeper, its mojo by way of the leader's unhurried, dagger-to-the-heart singing and blowing, and a creepy-crawly groove suggestive of Alan Price's *Animals in Memphis* circa '65.

Where Sansone and Greenlee utilize horns as soul-shake accoutrement, the Mellow Fellows from Chicago are a powerhouse r&b-horn band taken with '50s and '60s Leiber & Stoller and '60s Stax/Volt à la East Coast brethren the Asbury Jukes. Martin Allbritton and Gene "Daddy G" Barge (a rock & roll legend having hatched Gary "U.S." Bonds' 1961 classic "Quarter To Three") handle the singing chores on *Street Parade* now that group kingpin Larry "Big Twist" Nolan has left us. Both are up to the job, packing words with a spirit and assurance presumably born of the church and street corner. "Musical Director"/guitarist Peter Special has his cross hairs set right, and the horn and rhythm sections drive forward as inexorable musical forces. The material's likeable, especially "I've Got To Find A Way" and "We'll Be Friends," all the tunes underpinned by a melange of wittiness, sensuality, bonhomie, and optimism. (reviewed on CD)

—Frank-John Hadley



THE MELLOW FELLOWS

STREET PARTY—Alligator ALCD 4793: *I'VE GOT TO FIND A WAY*; *STREET PARTY*; *I'VE GOT A FEELING*; *FEELS LIKE RAIN*; *DRIVING WHEEL*; *WE'LL BE FRIENDS*; *DON'T TURN YOUR HEATER DOWN*; *SINCE I FELL FOR YOU*; *LAST NIGHT*; *ME AND MY WOMAN*; *BROAD DAYLIGHT*. (46:22)

Personnel: Martin Allbritton, vocals; Gene Barge, vocals, tenor sax; Peter Special, David Mick, guitar; Terry Ogolini, tenor sax; Don Tenuto, trumpet; Bob Halaj, bass; William Ratliff, Jeff Thomas, Steve Cobb, Morris Jennings, Eric Jensen, Wayne Stewart, drums; Chris Cameron, Matt Rose, Sidney J. Wingfield, keyboards; Johnny Rutledge, background vocals (cut 6).

★ ★ ★

JUMPIN' JOHNNY SANSONE

MR. GOOD THING—King Snake/Ichiban KIN



ARMEN DONELIAN

THE WAYFARER—Sunnyside 1049: *To Waltz Or Not; Jungle Groove; The Wayfarer; Chelsea Bridge; Stargazer; The Scattered Brotherhood; In Between; Celebration.* (65:08)

Personnel: Donelian, piano; Barry Danielian, trumpet, flugelhorn; Dick Oatts, soprano, tenor saxophone; Anthony Cox, bass; Bill Stewart, drums; Arto Tuncboyaci, percussion, vocals.

★ ★ ★ ½

The post-cool impressionism of Miles' mid-'60s quintet remains a key influence on the modern mainstream, but musicians draw different lessons from that model. Like Wynton's quintet or quartet and Harrison/Blanchard, Donelian's unit has one of those rhythm sections that approach the pulse three different ways without letting it slip away. But *Wayfarer* doesn't sound quite like anything from the Blakey-trained leaders named above dish up, because Donelian has a different perspective—his is more a composer's than improvisers' music.

Armen's previous Sunnyside with the same quintet—1988's *Secrets*—only hints at the new album's warmth and cohesion. Like Miles, Barry Danielian (no relation to the leader) has a plaintive, distant tone, employs minimal vibrato, and chooses his notes with care. On the heads he blends seamlessly with Oatts, whose brawny tenor sound here bears a curious resemblance to Gary Thomas' (evidence not of one influencing the other, but of ideas in the air available to all who choose to use them).

Still, it's Donelian's writing that hooks you: for "Groove" and "Brotherhood" he yokes his left hand to Cox's bass, to give the music an uncommonly sturdy spine. (Cox and drummer Stewart so deftly nail the fast 11/4 of Emin Findikoglu's "Waltz Or Not," you don't nervously count along.) On "Wayfarer" and "Stargazer," Donelian uses Tuncboyaci's high, clear choir-boy voice as the third horn; Arto is the only 'horn' on the effectively moody "Between," which unfolds slowly in the manner of Paul Bley's radical ballads—Donelian trusts wide open space, declining to fill the sonic vacuum he creates.

A couple of tunes are merely okay, and Armen's long solo on Strayhorn's "Chelsea Bridge" lacks the focus of the sextet stuff, but *Wayfarer's* best pieces are downright haunting. (reviewed on CD) —Kevin Whitehead

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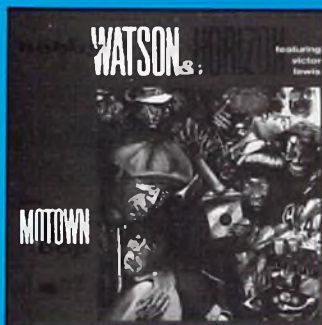
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1 THE METERS. "Little Old Money Maker" (from *Look-Ka Py Py, Rounder*) George Porter, bass; Zigaboo Modeliste, drums; Leo Noncentelli, guitar; Art Neville, keyboards.

Well, it's definitely got a Meters vibe to it, if it's not them. It's gotta be the Meters. It's got what we call in the studio, "that loose-tight feel." It's as funky as you can get. I hear a lot of Little Feat in this. These guys obviously were a big influence on them. They had that loose-tight thing down. Not stiff-crunchy but funky without being too perfect. The kind of funk that makes your body move. The first environment that I started being in bands in was the Miami environment, and there were a lot of Cuban bands there at the time. And all the Cuban bands were hip to the Meters. Every band had to play "Sissy Strut" and "Look-Ka Py Py" and those tunes. So I remember this sound well. Stars? Well, since the Meters play the Meters better than anybody else, you gotta give them a 5 for that New Orleans boogaloo shit.

2 VICTOR BAILEY. "Round Midnight" (from *Bottoms Up, Atlantic*) Bailey, bass; Jeff Watts, drums; Lonnie Plaxico, bass; Branford Marsalis, soprano sax; Jim Beard, piano; Rodney Jones, guitar.

Oh, I know what this is. Is this Victor Bailey? Yeah. God, what a player, man. Do you have this guy's phone number? I wanna get some lessons. It's funny, because when he first started playing, I was thinking, "God, that sounds like Jaco." That's the problem with fretless. Anytime you play one, everybody immediately goes, "Jaco!" That's the first thing you think when you hear that sound. You just know where it came from. But Victor is an amazing player. I dig his confidence with the bass. I don't know what he's like as a person, but he plays very confidently. We played together on the same bill once, for a Jaco benefit at the Lone Star in New York. He blew me away, man. I'll give him 4 stars for this.

3 JOHN PATITUCCI. "On The Corner" (from *ON THE CORNER, GRP*) Patitucci, four and six-string basses; Dave Weckl, drums; Judd Miller, EVI; John Beasley, piano; Dave Witham, synthesizers.

I like the groove, like half-time bebop. Almost hip-hop. That must be Patitucci on bass. He's such a perfect player, especially on acoustic. And his six-string electric work is inspiring. I just like his approach. He's so generous about it, somehow. He seems to be playing music for the right reason. He loves every minute of what he does. There's not a lot of things that he can't do, but I

WILL LEE
by Bill Milkowski

You've seen him jumping around with his bass on NBC's *Late Night with David Letterman* and you've probably heard him singing on a number of jingles, including national spots for Kentucky Fried Chicken, Nutrasweet, Coors Light, and dozens of other products. One of the most versatile and sought-after session bassists in New York, Will Lee has hundreds of jingles and more than 450 albums to his credit. Some of his most recent dates include albums by saxophonist Bob Berg, vibraphonist Gary Burton, keyboardist Charles Blenzig, guitarist Chuck Loeb, and singer Judy Collins.

Born 37 years ago in San Antonio, Texas, he grew up in Miami, where his father, Dr. William F. Lee III, headed the music department at the University of Miami. Will moved to New York in 1971 and became a member of the early rock-jazz fusion band Dreams, which featured Billy Cobham, John Abercrombie, and the Brecker brothers. He later cut sides as a member of the Brecker



brothers band. In the mid-'70s, he joined the 24th Street Band, which included guitarist Hiram Bullock, drummer Steve Jordan, and keyboardist Cliff Carter. Their second album was produced by Paul Shaffer, who later called on Will to fill the bass chair in the house band for Letterman's TV talk show.

Will recently finished work on a 24-track home studio and is now putting together a demo for a solo project he hopes to get out later this year. This was his first Blindfold Test.

don't think he messes around in those areas too much. I would have to give that a solid 4 stars.

4 JEFF BERLIN. "Mano De Piedra" (from *PUMP It! Passport Jazz*) Berlin, bass; Tris Boden, drums; Frank Gambale, guitar.

That is great! That's 5 stars right there. It's killing!

BM: It's Jeff Berlin.

WL: Amazing, Jeff Berlin. What a maniac. Those are some wild changes to be playing over, and he nailed them. The guy's brilliant. Have you ever heard his solo bass arrangement of "Dixie"? Unbelievable. But I would love to get some pointers from him or Victor Bailey about being able to play over changes like that.

5 STUART HAMM. "Sexually Active" (from *RADIO FREE ALBEMUTH, Relativity*) Hamm, bass; Joe Satriani, guitar; Mike Barsimanto, drums; Scott Collard and Glen Freundl, keyboards.

This is definitely Stu Hamm. You can hear by the tone of that Kubicki bass he plays. Heah, cool ending. Tape break? Stu writes things that nobody else can play. It's not all like straight-up-and-dance shit, there's some

totally illogical shit happening. And this one is pretty damn amazing. It loses the funk once in a while, but he's covering a lot of notes along the way. If you were gonna risk playing that many notes, it would be nice if he were able to stay right inside the pocket at all times. But except for that, I think it's incredible. 4½ stars.

6 AIRTO. "Nativity" (from *I'M FINE. HOW ARE YOU?, Warner Bros.*) Jaco Pastorius, bass; Airtto Moreira, percussion.

Man, that shit is so musical. I'm speechless. I gotta get a copy of that. Talk about a total musician. I mean both those cats. Airtto and Jaco. But God, man, the shit that Jaco chose to play . . . unbelievable! It was like all of Jaco's shit. The tone, the harmonic thing, the percussive thing, the groove, the melodic playing, the detuning of the low-E string. Really eventful. And it was totally connected. That was really inspiring. That shit is ridiculous. That's some soul, man. And some technique. But it was the soul that helped him arrive at all those places, that allowed him to do what he did to the bass. I'd give it 12 stars. I mean, when something really moves you that much . . . how many stars could you possibly give it? I've heard a lot of Jaco in my time, but that was like totally perfect in every way, it just seemed. **DB**