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DOWN BEAT

Jazz, Blues & Beyond

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

Now
for the encore...

FRANK MORGAN

beat drugs and jail
and hit it big with
'Mood Indigo.'
Now he's back with
'A Lovesome Thing.'



World Music Explosion

Blindfold Test:
Roy Haynes



04



Frank Morgan

ANDY FREEBERG



Steve Swallow and Carla Bley

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Danny Gatton

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Shirley Horn

MICHAEL WILDERMAN

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FRANK MORGAN

BEBOP IS A *L*OVESOME THING



By Larry Birnbaum



Photos by Andy Freeberg

At 58, Frank Morgan is an overnight sensation, a new face on a jazz scene where rising stars now tend to be a third his age. Since his belated re-emergence in the mid-'80s, the California-bred alto hit has enjoyed a critically acclaimed New York debut and made the rounds of press and broadcast interviews, European festival appearances, and studio dates—nine albums' worth so far. Last year he switched labels and earned an extended top-five run on *Billboard's* jazz chart with his Antilles debut, *Mood Indigo* (see "Reviews" Mar. '90). Wynton Marsalis, who guested on that session, proclaimed, "There is no one around who is better on alto saxophone than Frank Morgan." Morgan is even the subject of a chapter in Dr. Gerald G. Jampolsky's book *One Person Can Make a Difference*, right alongside Lech Walesa and Wally "Famous" Amos.

Careerwise, Morgan is right on time—a first-generation bebopper coming back from out of nowhere in the middle of a bop revival. Though, to anyone who's heard him play, his success is simply a matter of saxophone seduction. Lyrical, refined, unblushingly romantic, his alto sings a siren song, animating wordless tunes with the aching poetry of triumph and loss, fruition and desire. His poised, spare, sculpted lines mark him as an old master. But Morgan, who was just seven years old when Charlie Parker started him down the road to saxophone prowess, fits right in with today's adolescent neo-boppers. "I consider myself about 20," says Morgan. "My growth stopped at 17 and just started back." What happened in between—a harrowing story straight out of Hollywood, complete with happy ending—made him irresistible to everybody from *Time* magazine to CBS News.

Morgan's is an all-too-familiar cautionary tale of the bop era. After his father took him to see Parker play with Jay McShann's big band in Detroit, Frank moved to Los Angeles and progressed so quickly that many considered him the next Bird. But he copied the master too closely, taking his first shot of heroin at 17; five years later, he began a three-decade journey through California's prison system. "It was a stupid fantasy to try to be Charlie Parker," he says. "You couldn't pick a better idol as far as the art; but it's like Bird told me, you've got to have sense enough to know what to reject. Thank God for the State of California Department of Corrections; they saved me from myself. They put a horn in my hand and gave me an opportunity to rehabilitate, because that's the one thing I did do whenever they would lock me up, is woodshed."

Though he'd recorded one album as a leader in 1955 (the now out-of-print *Introducing Frank Morgan*, on GNP Crescendo), he remained unknown outside musicians' circles until Contemporary issued his comeback session, *Easy Living*, in 1985. Soon afterward, he made his first, long-dreamed-of trip to the Big Apple and was received like a conquering hero at the Village Vanguard, where he recorded *Bebop Lives!* In 1988 he moved to Brooklyn and married his longtime companion, artist Rosalinda Kolb, with whom he shares a renovated, three-story coach house in the Mews, an historic dockside housing complex. Everyone in the neighborhood seems to know him; yuppies and street people alike sing out a cheery "Hi, Frank!" at his approach.

"It's my wife who saved my life," he maintains. "She propped me up and said, 'If you love me and want to be with me, then you'll play your saxophone and stop going to prison.'"

With *Mood Indigo*, Morgan turned away from Parker-Gillespie tributes toward mellower Monk and Ellington treatments; that and major-label clout pushed the album over the top and kicked the media blitz into high gear. But what to do for an encore? His latest release, *A Lovesome Thing*, is cast in a similarly lush post-bop mold, with material ranging from Rodgers and Hart to Billy Strayhorn to Wayne Shorter—there's even a poignant, pointed rendition of "When You Wish Upon A Star." Featured are trumpet prodigy Roy Hargrove, whose fat, smooth lines melt over

Morgan's grainier lilt like butter on hot popcorn, along with drummer Lewis Nash, bassist David Williams, and Morgan's frequent duet partner, pianist George Cables. Vocalist Abbey Lincoln guests on two tracks, roasting a brand new chestnut out of the Depression-era weeper "Ten Cents A Dance." "I've been an admirer of Abbey's since I was in my teens," says Morgan, "but this is the first time we've had a chance to perform together; so it's a big dream realized."

Having put drugs behind him, Morgan still wrestles with his musical demons, though his sleek, incisive tone and sinuous, seemingly effortless phrasing appear to offer little room for improvement. "I've been blessed with pretty good technique," he modestly allows, "but I've also worked hard at it. I'm seeking to have ultimate control, to be able to play exactly what I think and feel. That'll probably never happen, but if it only happens once, that's what I want—to be consciously playing or projecting what is in me. It's really hard, because this human being is still so messed up that I can't completely free myself.

"I know a wise man strengthens his weaknesses, so you go back and really learn all the tunes you just barely knew the chord changes to. And all the things you've been ducking, all the things you know you're weak on—that's what you practice. It's a bitch to do that and to unlearn technique, to just use technique as a means to your story and nothing else. And to reach for that first idea that comes into your head, the one you really feel, before your pea brain can take over and say, 'You better not try that one—you'll miss it.' If you miss it, try again. That's jazz."

Morgan approaches his art with born-again zeal, eager to share the hard-won wisdom of his long musical gestation and determined to make every new day count. "I want to do whatever you need to do to play," he says. "To be sober, to be in control of your full faculties, to practice at home, not on the bandstand—or at home *and* on the bandstand, like Trane did, or Bird. Bird was practicing every time he played a solo. But the main thing is to reach for it, to be showing up and playing the bebop. I'm not talking about bebop circa 1948, but bebop as a concept of playing what you feel right now, inventing on the spot and conversing with your fellow musicians.



"And you better hear every note that everybody plays. If it's a quartet, it's a four-way conversation, and how many times have we been in a conversation and somebody says something that reflects immediately that they didn't hear a damn thing that was said? It's important to hear every note the bass player plays, every lick the drummer takes. Just because you're not soloing doesn't mean you're supposed to stop playing."



For years, he performed for a literally captive audience, learning the importance of listener communication the hard way when he co-led the warden's band at San Quentin with the late sax great Art Pepper. "The audience is just as important as the drummer," he insists. "They make it better, because there's all that power being channeled. When the audience is really listening, then we have the benefit of all that energy, all those minds that are helping us to play better than we ever could by ourselves. When they are listening intently, we can do whatever we want; we can convert that energy, rather than alienate by creating a we-they dichotomy between 'the cats on the bandstand and the damn fools in the audience.' In that case, the damn fools are really on the bandstand, because the audience can listen far better than I will ever be able to play the saxophone."

Though the jazz public only recently discovered his talents, Morgan was well known to his fellow musicians, both in and out of prison. "Were it not for me being locked up more often than Art Pepper or [the late trumpeter/singer] Chet Baker," he says, "I probably wouldn't be alive." Now he's finally getting the chance to perform with many of his old friends, grateful that the survivors of his generation are back in the limelight at last. "The fact that we are obviously an endangered species, in imminent danger of becoming extinct, has created a beautiful demand for those who are available. I'm thrilled every time I hear Tommy Flanagan or Hank Jones. And I got to play with Roy Haynes and Max [Roach] in Paris, on the same night. First they did the Charlie Parker songbook with Michel Legrand conducting 16 strings from the Paris Symphony, and then I came back and played with the Alto Summit—Phil Woods, Jackie McLean, Bob Mover, Vincent Herring, and C. Sharpe. I was just in heaven."

But Morgan, who never had a reputation to coast on, is still lean and hungry, playing with the fire-in-the-belly fervor of a much younger musician. Perhaps that's why he identifies so strongly with the latest generation of bebop flame-keepers, for whom he has nothing but praise. "It's the best thing that could happen. It's a very intelligent evolutionary choice they're making, and I really tip my hat to them. When I stand next to them on stage, it's better than any drugs I've ever had. Those youngsters are a new breed of jazz player. They're working on their pushups and taking their vitamins and reading and going to school and dressing sharp and saving their money. They're focused, they're

smart, and they're bad. It's a great source of direction and inspiration for me. I learn from them; they're my leaders and teachers. And out of the flock, there are some monsters who are going to get better and better. They're not going to self-destruct."

Some younger players have been criticized for their narrow stylistic focus, but Morgan himself accepts no such restrictions, expressing admiration for players from Louis Armstrong to Ornette Coleman. "I think our worst enemy is really the beast of self-limitation," he says. "Jazz, to me, is playing what you feel, without boundary lines. It adds up to self-limitation when you say, 'I'm an avant gardist. I play outside the changes'; because I know that in order to play outside, you better know something about the inside. I have yet to see a house that's started on the fourth story, with nothing underneath. The saxophone is a tool, like a typewriter or a tractor; it's a means to self-expression. It's up to you to find your pearls. Life means keeping yourself in a learning position; so I'm very young, because I'm so naive."

Morgan's last couple of albums, rarely rising above mid-tempo, have emphasized his magnificent ballad playing. Cool and caressing, passion-drenched yet un sentimental, this is his true forte; nobody, at least nowadays, does it better. "I think my heart is leading me toward more love vehicles," he says, "because I'm basically a romanticist—I want to find the beauty in everything—but I want to be able to go wherever my heart takes me." For the near future, he projects another duo album with Cables. "Playing every night with George Cables is about the closest to being in heaven I've been," says Morgan. "You see the job it's doing on the people and you realize, this is the gift of life. The greatest gift is for me to have the beautiful, awesome power to transform someone else's being just for that time and make them feel better."

"We have to learn from our mistakes," he concludes. "I've been blessed in every conceivable way, and I appreciate it. Were I to disregard all the beautiful things that are happening for me and figure I could party now because I'm making some money and I've got some clout, then take it right away from me! I have an assignment, a job to do. It's apparent to me that a force greater than me saved me from myself, so I could do what I'm doing now. I've been out of prison five years, and the things that have happened to me are astounding. I mean, Cinderella wasn't shit. So I have a resolve that the more nice things they write about, the harder I'll practice and the harder I'll try to be a better human being. Just to be the best Frank Morgan I can be." **DB**



FRANK MORGAN'S EQUIPMENT

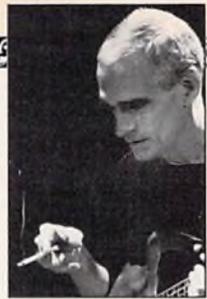
"I play a Selmer Super 80, the newest Selmer alto. I use a Selmer mouthpiece and medium Rico reeds—number 3½, sometimes 3. I'm looking for some better reeds, but the best cane is from Cuba; so ever since the Cuban trade has been cut off, you can't really get good reeds."

FRANK MORGAN SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

A *LOVESOME THING*—Antilles 422-848
213
MOOD *INDIGO*—Antilles 7 91320
REFLECTIONS—Contemporary C-14052
YARDBIRD *SUITE*—Contemporary C-14045

MAJOR *CHANGES*—Contemporary C-14039
DOUBLE *IMAGE*—Contemporary C-14035
(w/ George Cables)
BEBOP *LIVES!*—Contemporary C-14026
LAMENT—Contemporary C-14021
EASY *LIVING*—Contemporary C-14013

CARLA BLEY & STEVE SWALLOW



W. PATRICK HINELY/WORKPLAY



ENID FARBBER

MAKING

Sweet

It wasn't some enchanted evening. It wasn't that they looked across a crowded room and were smitten at first sight. Carla Bley and Steve Swallow were the best of friends.

They'd known each other for more than 25 years.

"It happened while we were watching television," said Steve. "We weren't looking across a room. We were just a couple of feet apart—which was good because we're both nearsighted."

MUSIC

By Michael Bourne

Their musical relationship became a much more personal relationship in 1985 while working on Carla's album *Night-Glo*, an album that found Steve joining Carla on the cover. And since then, he's become more than a featured player, more like a featured *presence* in Carla's music.

Though she usually worked with a 10-

piece band, their next recording was *Sextet*. "I stripped away the horns to get down to the rhythm section," said Carla. "Steve taught me that the rhythm section is the basis of everything that goes on top and it just drew me slowly down into the depths of the music."

They added strings for Steve's album

Carla, but with the 1988 album *Duets*, with Carla and Steve kissing (almost) on the cover, they became, for real, a twosome. That album, and touring with Steve, also transformed Carla from a bandleader to a soloist. "I played composer's piano before the duets and now I'm learning to play performer's piano," said Carla. "I can't play

fast but I sure am trying."

Carla re-orchestrated for a live recording, *Fleur Carnivore* (see "Reviews" Mar. '90), and again for a 1990 tour and soon-to-be-released album of *The Very Big Carla Bley Band*—but again, right at the heart of Carla's music is Steve Swallow.

They met in 1959 when Carla's then-husband, pianist Paul Bley, "needed a bass player cheap for a concert at Bard College," said Steve. "Largely because of the effect that concert had on me, I moved to New York and presented myself at their doorstep to play bass with Paul. Paul took me in and I spent the next two or three years hanging around their household. That's when I got to know Carla well and her music well."

Then, as now, much of Paul's repertoire was Carla's music. "I always thought that writing music was a service occupation, like being a doctor," said Carla, who placed second in *DB's* '90 Readers Poll for best composer. "I didn't want to be a player, so I wrote for Paul. He'd say, 'I need six songs for tomorrow,' so I'd knock off six songs. He'd say, 'I'm recording with a quartet featuring this person and I need three pieces,' so I'd do that."

Steve was inspired to compose watching Carla compose. "It hadn't occurred to me to write music until I met Carla, but I observed Carla compose hour after hour. I was intrigued by the *stillness* involved in composing music, a person just sitting there day after day like a painting. And a couple of years after I met Carla I started trying to compose myself."

Steve also encouraged others to play Carla's music. "I brought Carla's tunes with me. It was part of my dowry to every band I worked with." George Russell, Jimmy Giuffre, and Art Farmer, all with Steve in the band, recorded Carla's music—but no player recorded Carla Bley more than vibraphonist Gary Burton.

Steve first played with Gary in the Stan Getz band of the mid-'60s. "Stan never did any of Carla's tunes," said Steve, "but as soon as Gary's quartet started, a lot of the

initial repertoire was Carla's tunes." Each of Burton's first quartet albums included a Carla song, and in the fall of 1967, again encouraged by Steve, Gary recorded Carla's dramatic suite, *A Genuine Tong Funeral*. He's since recorded even more of Carla's music, including another whole album in 1975, *Dreams So Real*.

"Carla shows a great gift for songwriting that I identify with just an elite group of jazzers," said Burton. "The very gifted songwriters come up with music that's friendly, familiar, exciting, fresh, different, and you can play it over and over for years and never get tired of it. And in addition to these songwriting skills, Carla has a unique identity that comes through. Carla's humor shows through, and there's also her evocative imagery and moods. I know a Carla tune the minute I hear it. It's direct. It is not complicated. It is not layer upon layer of subtle interaction. It's very strong melody, very strong harmony, simply constructed. Carla wants her music to hit you square between the eyes."

"She hears and voices music like no other," writes bassist Charlie Haden in the notes for his new album, *Dream Keeper*. "She is the only person I have ever trusted or ever will trust to arrange the music for the Liberation Music Orchestra." Carla first arranged an album for the LMO in 1969 and again for *The Ballad Of The Fallen* in 1983. Carla composed the title piece of *Dream Keeper* and arranged the theme to words of Langston Hughes and traditional music from El Salvador, Venezuela, and the Spanish Civil War.

Though at first Carla wrote music for others, in the mid-'60s Carla became more active performing and recording herself. She and Paul Bley split up and, in 1964, Carla met Michael Mantler. Together they founded WATT WORKS in 1973, and, usually at their Grog Kill studio in Woodstock, N. Y., they've recorded a variety of albums, including music of their daughter Karen Mantler.

Carla and Michael separated amicably some years ago and Michael now handles all their business.

Steve Swallow, in the meantime, worked with Burton's quartet most of 20 years and, encouraged by Carla, composed more and

more. He joined Carla's band in 1978 and, except for several years with guitarist John Scofield, Steve and Carla have played together ever since.

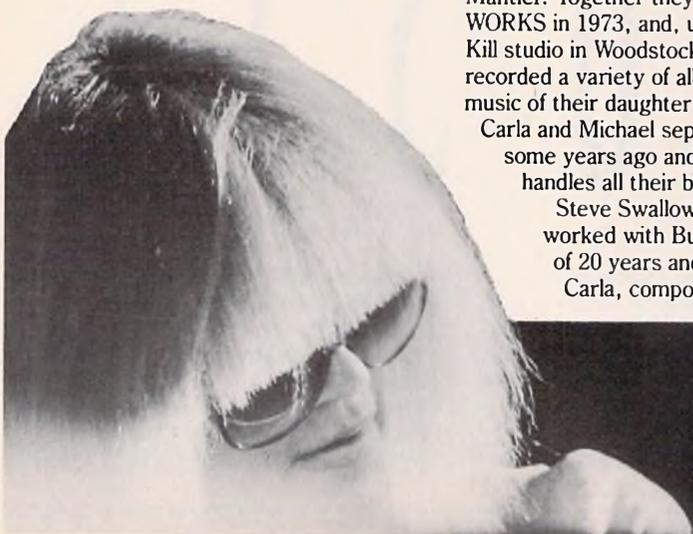
It was last fall—just after they'd recorded *The Very Big Carla Bley Band* in Ludwigsburg and just before the band opened the jazz festival in Berlin—that I talked with Steve and Carla. I observed that she's lived and worked with three extraordinary musicians—Paul Bley, Michael Mantler, and now Steve—and I wondered to what extent she feels her music inspired them. "I was affected by each of them," said Carla, "but I don't believe I've influenced them at all."

"I beg to differ," said Steve. "I've been very influenced by Carla from the beginning. Carla's music has changed and expanded, but there are aspects of it that appealed to me initially that still do. She spends more time than anybody else I know on every note of the piece, so that



there are no superfluous notes, no gratuitous notes. Everything that's on the sheet is essential. There's a kind of economy in her writing that appeals to me as an improviser because it leaves so much room for interpretation and expansion. And because I place such a high value on what she writes, it's moved me to appreciate playing songs with a little more concern and respect than many improvisers who just want to get through the melody and get to the solo."

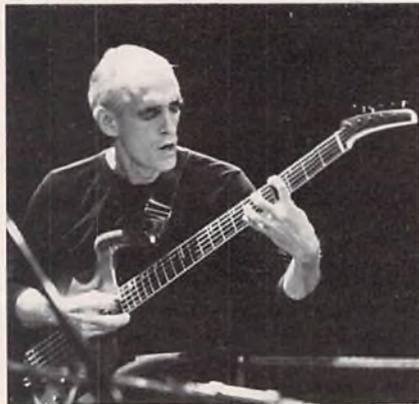
"The way Steve and I write is exactly opposite," said Carla. "I write from the melody first and he writes from the rhythm first. I think his tunes are easier to play



than mine. Since he's been a player for 30 years and I've been a player only five years really, his songs have more experience about what a really good series of chord changes can mean to a player—while I often think the players should bend a little to accommodate my chord changes.”

“That’s why I like Carla’s tunes better,” said Steve. “Mine are a little too easy. I welcome the challenge of bending to her composer’s will.”

“This record I just made, all of the players in the band were really nice about accommodating me in various bizarre ways,” said Carla. “One of the strangest was a big finale number with a series of



W PATRICK HINELY WORKPLAY

small solos by my four major soloists— [trumpeter] Lew Soloff, [alto saxist] Wolfgang Pusching, [tenor saxist] Andy Sheppard, and [trombonist] Gary Valente. When I listened to the rehearsal tape it sounded like four different people. I said, ‘Do you think, just for fun, you could pretend you’re all playing the same solo, so when a guy finishes his eight bars the next soloist takes off from that idea and takes it further, and then the next person expands it?’ That’s my dream, that this should not sound like individuals fighting over territory but sound like one person is playing. And they got it, like one mass solo. It turned out so beautiful.”

Carla worked on *The Very Big Carla Bley Band* for two years and, as usual, her music is diverse—abstract or swinging, dark or witty, and often theatrical. I observed that she’s more than a jazz composer, but Carla disagreed. “I would prefer to be called a jazz composer. I’ve always written for jazz musicians and I have never written a piece of music in my life that didn’t involve improvising. I’ve been infatuated with a lot of music along the way, but all of those were passing fancies. My true marriage is to jazz.”

And one last thing, speaking of marriage . . . “I’ve been married twice, and I married both of those guys to get them into the country. Paul Bley was Canadian. Michael Mantler was Austrian. It was political,” said Carla, laughing. “Steve is an American citizen, so we’ll never get married!”

‘This time it’s only love?’
“Yeah!”

DB

STEVE SWALLOW ELECTRIC BASSIST

Gary Burton remembers when Steve Swallow became an electric bassist. “It was 1969, about two years into our band. We were at the NAMM show in Chicago. We walked by the Gibson booth and they said, ‘Here’s a bass. Here’s an amp. If you like it, you can have it.’ Steve used it first on a couple of tunes, but over the next year he was playing it more and more until he was playing the acoustic bass on just one tune. He said, ‘This is ridiculous. I’m not going to carry this around anymore.’ That was it. Steve got inside the electric bass and committed himself to it.”

“I haven’t played the acoustic bass since,” said Steve, perennial winner for best electric bassist in both *DB* polls. “It may have been perversity. It may have been just that I got my hands on it and loved the way it felt.” He learned to play it with guitar fingering and a pick. “I was still trying to play like my elders on the acoustic bass. Percy Heath. Paul Chambers. I’d also spent a lot of time playing with Jim Hall, so my approach to the instrument as a large guitar was strongly influenced by playing next to Jim. I think I sound like Jim.”

Another sound that affected him was a voice. “Marvin Gaye had a stronger influence on my playing than electric bass players had. Something about the phrasing, the articulation, the

expressiveness of Marvin Gaye, and Otis Redding and James Brown—those singers grabbed hold of me and made me want to sound more like a singer than an instrumentalist.”

Steve’s sound, like the music of Carla Bley, is characteristically lyrical. Steve’s bass nowadays even looks like a lyre, and features an extra string. “I got a fifth string just to have the higher register, to be able to play up to C above middle C—that’s Marvin Gaye’s range. I wanted that high-tenor voice, the falsetto range of a soul tenor. An unexpected bonus is that in the lower register, way down at the bottom of the instrument, without moving my hand position, I have access to two octaves. Just the range of my walking lines is expanded by half an octave.

“I can play three-note and four-note chords. I’m not a guitar player but I can assume the guitar function, the comping function. There’s some stuff I can’t do but the register of the piano’s left hand for comping purposes is accessible to me. I’ve played piano all my life, and I can think about Bud Powell’s left-hand voicings. There’s a lot I can do on this instrument. . . .

“I like to be a shadow figure, a prematurely *grise eminence*,” said Steve. “It’s probably why I chose to be a bass player. I like being in the second line—and I’ve found I can get a lot done musically under other folk’s names, so I save myself a lot of problems.” —*M.B.*

THEIR SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

Carla Bley as a leader

THE VERY BIG CARLA BLEY BAND—WATT/23 847 942
FLEUR CARNIVORE—WATT/21 839 662
ESCALATOR OVER THE HILL—JCOA 839 310
DINNER MUSIC—WATT/6 825 815
EUROPEAN TOUR 1977—WATT/8 831 830
MUSIQUE MECHANIQUE—WATT/9 839 313
SOCIAL STUDIES—WATT/11 831 831
LIVE—WATT/12 815 730
HEAVY HEART—WATT/14 817 864
NIGHT-GLO—WATT/16 827 640
ORCHESTRA SICILIANO PLAYS THE MUSIC OF CARLA BLEY—XtraWATT/4 843 207

with Steve Swallow

DUETS—WATT/20 837 345
CARLA—XtraWATT/2 833 492

with Michael Mantler

THE JAZZ COMPOSER’S ORCHESTRA—JCOA 841 124
THE HAPLESS CHILD—WATT/4 831 828
SOMETHING THERE—WATT/13 831 829

Bley, Swallow, Mantler

THE WATT WORKS FAMILY ALBUM—WATT/22 841 478

Gary Burton with Steve Swallow

ARTIST’S CHOICE—Bluebird 6280-2-RB
WORKS—ECM 823 267
DREAMS SO REAL—ECM 833 329
REAL LIFE HITS—ECM 825 235

Charlie Haden with Carla Bley

DREAM KEEPER—Blue Note CDP 7 95474
THE BALLAD OF THE FALLEN—ECM 811 546
LIBERATION MUSIC ORCHESTRA—Impulse MCAD-39125



W PATRICK HINELY WORKPLAY

THEIR EQUIPMENT

“My bass is a five-string bass made for me by Ken Parker with a high-C string,” said Steve Swallow. “I use La Bella strings, the thinnest gauge they make. My pickups were specially made for me by Larry Fishman. My amp is a Walter Woods and I use whatever speaker cabinet is available to me. I use no effects.”

“I just use whatever piano they have,” said Carla Bley. “Karen plays the organ now. It’s a Korg BX-3 with a Leslie speaker. I used to play the organ and hire a piano player, but when Karen learned to play the organ I learned to play the piano—so it saves me a pianist’s salary.”

It's a Glob

World beat, the thriving, passionate rhythms of life from around the globe, has found its way down river and begun to infiltrate the aging pop aristocracy—just as the music industry has begun to push the brush aside with a willingness to explore a new territory. The two armies have met, and the result is a tasty, new sound finding hungry ears here.

Voracious for new music and lush textural backdrops, today's musicians are soaking up the venturesome rhythms and alluring vocals of colleagues in Zimbabwe, Rio, and East India. In the '80s, pop artists Paul Simon, David Byrne, and Peter Gabriel took the plunge—reviving their own waning careers?—incorporating the talent of South African a cappella group Ladysmith Black Mambazo, Brazilian diva Margareth Menezes, and Senegalese pop idol Youssou N'Dour. More importantly, these artists brought to the American public's attention the fine talents of their world music counterparts.

Other world music artists, such as the great Malian vocalist Salif Keita, who resides in Paris, have devoured Western pop and jazz rhythms, transforming their native music into tunes digestible for Western ears. Likewise, the majority of Zairian guitarists, South African township pop, Zimbabwe's political songwriters, and "jit jive" (made famous by the Bhundu Boys) have infused their songs with Bob Marley-influenced lyrics, Latin samba and rumba grooves, and reggae's transfixing rhythms.

What results is a rich cultural melange—a world beat—that is growing as well as the collaborative recording projects between musicians of the Third World and the First.

Saxophonist Steve Williamson and the Chieftain's Sean Keane and Kevin Conneff teamed up with Malian bluesman Ali Farka Toure on *The River* (see discography); London-based rapper MC Mello jammed with Cameroon's Makossa-man, Manu Dibango; ethno-tech wizard Jon Hassell synched up with Burkino Faso's Farafina on *Flash Of The Spirit* (Capitol/Intuition 91186), and soon we'll hear Miles Davis, Wayne Shorter, and Carlos Santana accompanying Malian shaman Keita on a project produced by Joe Zawinul.

While world music is increasing in popularity (it's market share easily equals that of either jazz or classical recordings), whether it will affect pop music the way Latin and reggae have remains to be seen. That these world beat musics are familiar to Americans (for generations, in the case of Latin) is due more to their influence among musicians than their popularity with audiences. Will the current interest in world music, however influential, be simply a respite before the next wave of pop icons? Or is the next pop supergroup to be found in a seedy basement bar on the Left Bank of Paris, in a Brazilian nightclub, or working out their vocal harmonies in a South African township?

These collaborations have had a history. In 1960, the once exiled "Queen of African Song," Miriam Makeba came together with Harry Belafonte; in 1981, experimentalist Brian Eno mixed the percussive gnawa music of North Africa with David Byrne's pop song sensibility; and in 1983, producer Bill Laswell enlisted Cuban percussionist Daniel Ponce on Herbie Hancock's Grammy Award-winner *Rock II*.

"Santana was the most hip," exclaims Verna Gillis, a New York-based producer who first brought the Nigerian juju music of King Sunny Ade to North America. Through Santana's music, especially "Oye Como Va" with salsa bandleader Tito Puente, "we were

◆ We need to get the music on radio

to break out of the ghetto it's in



not specialty shows. This music has

shows with broader musical styles,

being exposed to world music before the term came about." Santana's Latin rhythms were apparent, exposed via familiar rock-pop song formulas, as were the Indian sitar twangs on the Beatles' "Tomorrow Never Knows," and the Rolling Stones' "Paint It Black." Sixties culture consumers had "world beat" stars of their own—Ravi Shankar, the Pennywhistlers, and, in the early '70s, Chile's *Nueva Trova* movement, which influenced songwriter Paul Simon.

Today, we're witnessing not only a borrowing of musical styles—salsa, soukous, rai, and zouk—but collaborations and imports that satisfy our hunger for new sounds. Rock has, at times, hit a brick wall when it comes to innovation. And yet, some of it's more innovative stars, Jackson Browne, Santana, and Kate Bush, have incorporated the talents of world music artists in their own recordings and performances. A commoditization of world music, some might say. Look at the surprising success of the Bulgarian State Female Vocal Choir, whose iridescent choral vibrations turned thousands on to music from Eastern Europe, and whose series of records, *Mystère Des Voix Bulgares* (Nonesuch 72011, 79165, 79211), ignited the yuppie community, paving a path for other Eastern European artists: Bulgarian Ivo Papasov and his gypsy-style Wedding Band, Hungary's Muzsikás and Trio Bulgarka, heard on Kate Bush's *The Sensual World* (Columbia 44164).

From France came the Gipsy Kings, who amassed huge sales from their Latin hits "Volare" and "Bamboleo" from in-store and restaurant play, and covered "Hotel California" for Elektra's 40th anniversary sampler.

Malian vocalist Keita, whose brilliant album *Soro* similarly incorporates Western arrangements and recording wizardry, can be heard on the recent Cole Porter tribute *Red, Hot And Blue* (Chrysalis 21799) singing "Begin The Beguine" in his native Bambara, and Santana paid homage to him by opening his 1990 tour with "Soro."

"It's up to the superstars to carry the torch," explains MTV's VP of international programming, Steve Leeds. "It's on Peter Gabriel's shoulders personally." Stars who collaborate with world music artists have paved a way for world beat musicians to enter the U.S. market, and there's no doubt that Gabriel has utilized his considerable following.

In 1981, the first WOMAD (World of Music and Dance) festival was held in Bristol, England, where foreign acts such as Ekome, Shankar, Drummers of Burundi, and Musicians of the Nile shared the bill with popular bands the Beat, XTC, and the Pogues. These live performances were released as a series of compilation albums on the WOMAD label, and in 1989 Gabriel launched the Real World label: China's Guo Brothers, Tanzania's Remmy Ongala, Zairian veteran Tabu Ley, and Mozambique's Mama Mosambiki. Gabriel

al Village Out There

By Brooke Wentz

also collaborated with Senegal's famed Youssou N'Dour (World Beat winner in DB's 1990 Critics Poll) on songs that charted abroad and in the States—"In Your Eyes" and "Shaking The Tree"—procuring a recording contract for N'Dour in Britain.

Alongside Gabriel in supporting new world talent is Talking Head David Byrne. Byrne, who has immersed himself in the music of Brazil, produced two compilations for Sire (*Beleza Tropical: Brazil Classics Vol. 1* and *O Samba: Brazil Classics Vol. 2*), toured with his backing band Rei Momo, and has recently launched his label Luaka Bop, which released music by Brazilian pop arranger Tom Ze. In April, they'll be releasing a greatest-hits package by Silvio Rodriguez, the Woody Guthrie of Cuba, and *Forró, Etc.*, a compilation of Tex-Mex folk music from the northeastern region of Brazil.

Paul Simon rejuvenated his career by enlisting the wondrous talents of Ladysmith Black Mambazo and Youssou N'Dour on 1986's *Graceland*. More recently, during a two-year collaboration process, Simon was "looking for sounds that are real and emotional" for *The Rhythm Of The Saints* (see "Reviews" Feb. '91). He successfully melds the poetic songwriting and vocal quality of his 1970's recordings with the Brazilian percussion group Olodum, a flavor from the streets of Salvador plus guitar lilt from West Africa.

Yet we won't see tracks from Simon's record on *Billboard's* world music charts. "Warner has asked why I won't put him on the charts," says Eric Lowenhar, *Billboard's* manager of New Age and World Music charts, who finds Simon's music on the Adult Contemporary charts. "We need to give other artists their own place."

In May 1990, *Billboard* initiated a world music chart, based on retail sales, due to the large increase in retail action. "In the late '70s to '80s, this music was found in specialty record shops located



Papa Wemba—
Soukous with
Sapeur style; Ali
Farka Toure (opposite
page)—Malian blues
guitarist



HORIZON RECORDS: REINTERPRETING THE PAST

A&M Records, home of the Neville Brothers, Barry White, Stan Getz, and Sting, has revived the Horizon label with world music and novelty collaborative projects. Originally founded in the 1970's as a jazz label, Horizon helped nourish the careers of Dr. John, Don Cherry, Ornette Coleman, Brenda Russell, and the Yellow Magic Orchestra. Today, it will be charting new paths of artistic exploration by bringing together Malian blues guitarists with virtuosic American stringmaestros, releasing a recording of Argentine vocal powerhouse Mercedes Sosa and another by Brazilian percussionist Djalmá Correa. The eclectic duo of Persian vocalist Sussan Deyhim, whose voice can be heard on Peter Gabriel's *Last Temptation Of Christ* soundtrack, and com-

poser/performer Richard Horowitz, who composed North African music for Bernardo Bertolucci's film, *The Sheltering Sky*, will also be releasing an album of their ethno-techno pop on Horizon.

Under the auspices of A&M's vice chairman Herb Alpert, a former #1 hitmaking crossover artist himself, Horizon is headed by radio veteran Tom Schnabel, former music director of Los Angeles' KCRW and host of *Morning Becomes Eclectic*. Since the late '70s, Schnabel's been bringing world music to Los Angeles listeners, years before the term was invented. Today, he travels to South America, snooping around dusty vaults, "combing the prodigious Polygram Brazil catalog for overlooked classics that should be reissued," describes Schnabel. "We have plans to do the same with Polygram Africa." Horizon's scintillating world sounds and global mergers will be available this spring. —B.W.

Bulgarian State Radio & Television Female Vocal Choir—raw, surreal, mysterious



WENDY LAMM

in small ethnic neighborhoods. But after a while, the music crossed over to adult pop and the buyer changed from an ethnic listener to a yuppie—over 90 percent," explains Lowenhar. "Now major chains such as Tower, Leopolds on the West Coast, and Rose in Chicago have stocked the music."

As a result, the American music industry responded accordingly. Established labels Island, Polygram, A&M, and Virgin formed subsidiaries featuring global sounds—Mango, Nonesuch, Urban Africa, Horizon, and Earthworks, respectively (see box). American-based world music labels Shanachie, Hannibal, and Mickey Hart's The World on Rykodisc have increased distribution. And independent European labels that release catalogs of indigenous non-Western music—CMP, Stern's, Globestyle, Touch, and World Circuit—are attractive licensing bait for deals in the States.

"We're looking to develop acts . . . music that will thicken in the long run," comments Jerry Rappaport, director of Mango A&R. But "the main problem is audiences hearing the music," he continues. "At times, we are preaching to the converted and need to get the music on radio shows with broader musical styles, not specialty shows. This music has to break out of the ghetto it's in."

One public radio show focusing on world music that has increased listenership from 60 to 210 stations over three years is *Afropop Worldwide*, produced by Sean Barlow and hosted by Cameroonian Georges Collinet. Focusing on contemporary African, diaspora, and Latin New York, *Afropop* has been

added to BBC's Radio 5 heard in both London and Paris.

What next? Videos on MTV? No, "Americans are xenophobic," puffs MTV's Leeds. "If something is out of the mainstream, they [listeners] don't want to know about it . . . we've got to sugarcoat it."

Their weekly show, *Earth To MTV*, programs hit videos from around the world, catchy tracks by Cameroon punks Les Têtes Brulées (see "Reviews" p. 32), Yemenite Ofra Haza, and Tunisian beauty, Amina.

Other countries, more receptive than the U.S. and with larger West Indian and African populations, have already reacted. Through globe-smart radio and television shows (*Rhythms Of The World*), publications (*Folk Roots*, *Straight No Chaser*, and *World Beat*), records, and more inexpensive air transport to foreign lands, Europeans have caught on much quicker. Pakistani vocalist Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan (World Beat TDWR in DB's 1990 Critics Poll) garners huge success abroad and recently released *Mustt Mustt* with bassist Darryl Jones and composer Michael Brook. Guadalupe's Kassav, Haiti's Boukman Experyans, and Zaire's Papa Wemba send audiences to their feet! And let's not forget the Cheb(a)s, those charismatic Algerian rai artists with their rhythmic vocal tracks and disco-friendly beats.

Yes, it's time to boogie to a new beat; not rap, rock, reggae, or disco. Try gyrating those hips to soukous, rai, juju, or zouk. But be forewarned, these global sounds are seductive and addictive; better yet, they're here to stay. **DB**

◆ "It's up to the superstars

personally." -MTV's Steve Leeds



Peter Gabriel's shoulders

to carry the torch... It's on

ENID FARBER



Margareth Menezes and David Byrne on the *Rei Momo* tour



HYOU VIELZ

Ivo Papasov—gypsy-style wedding music at its best

ANNOTATED DISCOGRAPHY *(lesser-known, but nonetheless important recordings)*

Compilations

Konbit Burning Rhythms of Haiti—AM—CA 5281

Comprehensive compilation by filmmaker Jonathan Denume of different musics from Haiti—rara, compa, and salsa. Includes a Creole version of the Neville Brothers' "My Blood."

The Indestructible Beat of Soweto—Shanachie 43033

The best compilation of music from South Africa: Ladysmith Black Mambazo, Mahlathini, Malombo, and more. Uptempo with vocals and a strong backbeat.

Beleza Tropical—Sire 9 25805

David Byrne's great Brazilian party tape. Easy, fun listening with samba, rumba, alluring Latin beats, whistles, and soft percussion. Contributions by famed Caetano Veloso, Jorge Ben, Milton Nascimento, and Gal Costa.

Rai Rebels—Earthworks 91000

Arabic pop music. Repetitive lilts with seductive nasal vocals.

One of the most beautifully recorded duos of 1988.

Ali Farka Toure, *The River*—Mango 162 539 897

Malian blues guitarist who combined forces with the Chieftains and Steve Williamson. Beautifully uplifting, light, and cheery. A classic!

Muzsikás, *The Prisoner's Song*—Hannibal 1341

Modern Hungarian folk songs using traditional instruments—bass, fiddles, hurdy-gurdy, and the pleasant, quavering voice of Marta Sebestyen. Melodious with unusual phrasing.

Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, *Qawwal And Party Volume One*—WOMAD 004

Inspiring, joyous modern qawwal music—devotional music sung by the Sufis. Tabla and sitar accompany Nusrat's vibrant, strong vocals that quicken and slow depending on mood. Melodic and improvisational at the same time. See him live!

Salif Keita, *Soro*—Mango 9808

One of the most lush recordings of African music in existence. Rich, serene vocals soaring over plush orchestrations and electric kora.

Nahawa Doumbia, *Didadi*—Shanachie 64015

The most overlooked *great* woman vocalist from Mali. Driving rhythms influenced by rock and African ritual dance beats. Synthesizers, sax, and rich, horn sections.

Papa Wemba, *Papa Wemba*—Sterns 1026

Seductive, danceable, Zairian soukous at its best. Wemba's vocals roll with ease and croon with enthusiasm. Total fun!

Kanda Bongo Man, *Kwassa Kwassa*—Hannibal 1343

Riviting Zairian beats that inspired the swiveling-hips dance called Kwassa Kwassa. Infectious rhythms with deft guitar licks.

Solimin Gamil, *The Egyptian Music*—Touch 'TO:7

Authentic recordings of Egyptian songs that celebrate folk rituals. Beautiful, sublime, and transcendent.



JAMES FRASHER

Miriam Makeba, *Sangoma*—Warner Bros. 25673

The South African diva with female chorus sing 19 short, traditional songs in Zulu. Using minimal accompaniment, the songs are closely linked to black American a capella spirituals and call-and-response African work songs. Excellent production.

Abdullah Ibrahim, *African Horns*—KAZ LP8

Jazz influenced by zydeco and r&b. Upbeat, instrumental, and terrifically harmonic. Crisply produced.

(see "Reviews" p. 42 for more)
(For hard-to-find titles, contact North Country Dist., Cadence Bldg., Redwood, NY 13679, (315) 287-2852, or Stern's, 598 Broadway, NYC, NY 10012, (212) 925-1648.)

Individuals



ENID FARBER

Baaba Maal & Mansour Seck, *Djam Leelii*—Mango 9840

Maal—the next gem to emerge from Senegal; soothing, passionate, liquid vocals with iridescent acoustic guitar.

DANNY GATTON

OF

CARS
BARS

AND

VINTAGE
GUITARS



BY GEOFFREY HIMES

PHOTOS BY MICHAEL WILDERMAN

I imagine that you're an English roots-rock guitarist—say, Dave Edmunds or Billy Bremner—and you've spent your whole life trying to look and sound like the mythic American guitarist of your imagination. An obscure player hailing from some backwater southern town like Bogalusa, Louisiana, or Accokeek, Maryland—a short, pudgy guy in cowboy boots with his hair greased back in a ducktail. You imagine a cat who grew up listening to Bob Wills, Benny Goodman, Les Paul, Bill Monroe, Elvis Presley, and Bo Diddley, who can play them all with both speed and finesse—a stay-at-home type who's content to perform in the local



bar on weekends for the sheer love of the music and a few beers, spending his weekdays working on cars.

Imagine your delight when you learn that this improbable, mythic guitarist really exists. His name is Danny Gatton. But his status as the "World's Greatest Unknown Guitarist" might be threatened now that this Accokeek musician is releasing his first major-label album, *88 Elmira Street* for Elektra.

The all-instrumental album is a *tour de force* that more than justifies Gatton's underground legend. It's not just that he's fast, although he does skitter across the fretboard flawlessly on a long, astonishing run of 16th notes during his rockabilly showcase, "Elmira St. Boogie." Nor that he has tremendous tonal control, although he does make the same Fender Telecaster sound like a Hawaiian tabletop guitar, a vibraharp, a mandolin, and even a bongo drum on Les Baxter's "Quiet Village." He's an inspired harmonic improviser—he transforms the theme from *The Simpsons* into a four-chord, three-part adventure;

but that's not it, either.

True, he plays with complete rhythmic control—he pushes John Patton's hard-bop standard, "Funky Mama," into a rave-up rocker and he plays perfect arpeggio triplets against the steady blues beat of "Blues Newburg"—and his live show does often segue seamlessly from Gene Vincent to Bill Doggett to Ray Price to Benny Goodman in the same set. What's most impressive about Gatton is the way he uses all these skills—his speed, tone, harmonics, rhythm, and versatility—to tell a story every time he plays a song. Every solo has a beginning, middle, and end. Every phrase—no matter how surprising—follows naturally from its predecessor.

As impressive as the album is, it only underlines the question that has haunted Gatton throughout his career: If he's so good, why isn't he famous? The answer has nothing to do with substance abuse (Gatton's drug of choice has always been beer, which has only affected his waistline).

"It's nobody's fault but mine," Gatton admits. "I didn't pursue it. I was making a living, drinking beer, and hanging out with the boys. I thought that was all there was to it. I didn't know anyone who had made it, and I didn't know how to go about it. I was real comfortable playing in bands with my old friends. I don't go out much unless I'm playing; I'd rather stay home with my family and work on my cars."



Gatton is sitting in the kitchen of his half-renovated farmhouse on a southern Maryland peninsula that pokes into the Potomac. Through the windows, one can see four old cars awaiting disassembly for parts; beyond the cars are flat soybean fields and a line of cedars. Gatton seems so comfortable in his homestead that it's easy to understand why he's reluctant to leave.

"Oh, I could have moved somewhere else and done just fine," he acknowledges. He had his chances. He got invitations to play with Bobby Scott, Woody Herman, John Fogerty, and Barbara Mandrell, but he turned them down. He actually accepted an offer to join Lowell George's band, but George died the night after Gatton

accepted. He spent a few months in L.A. and was starting to get session work when he got homesick and went back to Maryland. He did end up going on the road with country star Roger Miller and rockabilly revivalist Robert Gordon, but negotiations for his own major-label deal never quite turned into contracts.

"I damn near quit completely in '86," Gatton says. "I got fed up with the whole thing—I was tired of playing in beer joints and I was tired of being a sideman. I just wanted to stop and do something tangible, like building cars. But once you do music, it gets into your blood. You can get away from it for awhile, but it comes back to you sooner or later. It's a god-given talent, and I'd be cheating myself if I didn't make the maximum use of it. I had devoted my whole life to it, and it seemed a shame not to see it through as far as possible. I had never given it the big push, and now seemed the time to do it. I'm not getting any younger."

Gatton was born 45 years ago in Washington, and until he was 16 grew up at the address immortalized as his new album title. "The records my folks played around the house included not only western swing like Bob Wills and Hank Thompson," Gatton remembers, "but also eastern swing like the Dorsey Brothers and Benny Goodman. Then my sister Donna started bringing home all the rock & roll records: Little Richard, Elvis, Fats, Jerry Lee. I soaked

up everything like a sponge."

It was a time and a place where country, blues, jazz, and rock & roll seemed intrinsically connected. If you were a working-class white south of the Mason-Dixon Line, you were a country-music fan. If you liked your country music a little wild, you listened to rockabilly, and it was a short jump from there to the blues. If you liked your country music with sophisticated picking, you listened to western swing and country-boogie, and it was a short jump to jazz. These connections were part of Gatton's first musical experiences, and he later celebrated those links by titling his first two albums *American Music* and *Redneck Jazz*.

"When I was growing up," Gatton points out, "guys in country bands had to play swing and rock as well. But the jazz and rock players never had to learn anything else, so there was an advantage to being a country guitarist. A jazz musician always thought he was playing down if he had to play country, but a country musician thought he was playing up when he played jazz. That's how you get redneck jazz."

"Even if I had tried to make it earlier, I would have had a hard time, because I do so many different things. Companies always want to know, 'What kind of music do you play?' I play them all and I try to do them the best I can. I figure if you play a variety of songs, tempos, and styles, you're like a painter who uses all the colors. I use my own palette and my own colors and I try to paint my own aural picture as I go along. Why should a person be stifled from using all the resources at his disposal?" DB

DANNY GATTON'S EQUIPMENT

Danny Gatton began his career favoring hollow-body Gibson guitars, but the example of Roy Buchanan and others converted him to solid-body Fender Telecasters. Gatton still owns and uses the 1954 Gibson ES 295 that Scotty Moore used on Elvis Presley's original Sun recordings, but otherwise Gatton sticks to Fenders. He's on Fender's Advisory Board, and this year the company is bringing out the Danny Gatton Signature Model guitar. Modeled on Gatton's old beloved 1953 Telecaster, the Signature Model features two humbucking Joe Barden pickups, cubic zirconium side markers, a 22nd fret, oversized knobs, and Southern swamp ash wood. He liked the prototype of the Signature Model so much that he traded in his '53 for a 1934 Ford.

Gatton uses Fender Dynamax 250R strings (.010, .013, .015, .026, .036, .046), which he beers with a combination of cigarette ashes and beer to get the oil off. "There's nothing worse than new, oily strings. They'll slip under your finger and make an ass of you every time. Also, it takes that bright, new string sound off the wound strings on the bottom."

His main amp is an old pre-CBS Fender Vibrolux made about '63. He also uses a Fender Super Reverb from about a '63. "I used these kinds of amps years and years. You can still find them if you look in the right closet. I'm getting a reproduction of the old Fender Vibroverb from the early '60s." Gatton's picks are small, heavy, Fender jazz picks. He uses a Boss Digital Delay pedal on the couple rockabilly tunes he plays each night.

DANNY GATTON SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as leader

88 ELMIRA STREET—Elektra 61032
UNFINISHED BUSINESS—NRG NCD-02479 (1987, CD version with two bonus tracks released in 1989)
REDNECK JAZZ—NRG NR9646 (1978, out of print, CD reissue with bonus tracks due in 1991)
AMERICAN MUSIC—Alladin ALPS 102 (credited to Danny and the Fat Boys, out of print, 1975)

as a sideman

RUBAIYAT: ELEKTRA'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY—Elektra 60940 (Gatton contributed a remake of Rhinoceros' "Apricot Brandy" to this multi-artist anthology, 1990)
BLAZING TELECASTERS—Powerhouse P-108 (w/Tom Principato)
REACTION—Rounder 9004 (w/Johnny Seaton, 1990)
TOO FAST TO LIVE, TOO YOUNG TO DIE—RCA AFL1-4380 (w/Robert Gordon, 1982)
ARE YOU GONNA BE THE ONE—RCA AFL1-3733 (w/Robert Gordon, 1981)

An older, wiser Shirley Horn seated herself at the Village Vanguard's venerable Steinway grand. The club was packed for her opening set on a frigid Tuesday night. Some 30 years ago on another crowded night, Horn made her New York debut here, when Miles Davis insisted that this young pianist/singer open for him. More recently, she's been here under

her own steam.

Throughout the night, Horn revealed the kind of mesmerizing power that must have caught Davis' ear on *Embers And Ashes*, her first album recorded in 1960. There were subtle signs of New York jitters—a lyric lost here and there, a tentative reentry. But by the second set, they had totally evaporated. As a pianist,

Horn has the eloquence of Erroll Garner, the blues-based swing of Wynton Kelly, and the harmonic sophistication of Bill Evans. But once she begins to sing, the already cogent sound of her trio gets right under your skin. Without any artifice, she can get to the root of a lyric or riskily stretch a phrase to a breaking point. And her repertoire of standards (and lesser-known songs by

Irving Berlin, Johnny Mandel, and others) is infused by her unremitting sense of swing.

Until a few years ago, Horn's talents were mostly appreciated by other musicians or local audiences around Washington, D.C., her hometown, where she's long been regarded as a local treasure. Despite her brushes with success in New York in the

'60s, she chose to stay in D.C. and nourish a marriage and a daughter, while continuing to perform in local venues. But once her daughter was on her own, a successful appearance at the NorthSea Jazz Festival in the early '80s encouraged her to broaden her scope. In 1988 she signed a contract with Verve, and the label's support has helped her get the increased visibility she

clearly deserves. In 1990, in addition to many club dates, she performed at several European jazz festivals, in Japan, at the Chicago Jazz Festival, and appeared in the nightclub sequence of the film *Tune In Tomorrow*, backed by Wynton Marsalis.

You Won't Forget Me, her current Verve release, is as captivating as her two previous albums for the label (see

"Reviews" Mar. '91). The intuitive unity of her trio is forged by herself and her long-term bass player Charles Ables and Steve Williams on drums. Supported by this supple backbone, the album's guest soloists—tenor player Buck Hill (an old friend as well as musical associate), Toots Thielemans, Wynton and Branford Marsalis, and Miles Davis—fall right in with the mood

Shirley Horn

I t had to be

Shirley

By Stephanie Stein



of the moment. Davis' performance on the title track is cool and evocative, his taut obbligato the perfect complement for Horn.

A handsome, soft-spoken woman in her late 50's, Horn reflected on her career good-naturedly, modest about herself and quick to praise her fellow artists. "I'm not a pusher, but it seems to be my turn. So many articles said I'd retired. Then I'd do a concert, and bam—all of a sudden, I'm out of retirement. The truth is, I was busy all the time. I played two weeks after my daughter was born and the whole time she was growing up.

"That Vanguard date was my big New York debut—that was it. I remember the night we opened was also the opening night for *Raisin In The Sun*. Well, it was bad enough that I was opening for Miles—but in walked Sidney Poitier and Lena Horne! Charlie Mingus was standing by the stairs all night with his coat on. I saw faces I only knew from record covers. I was so thrilled that when Sidney Poitier came up and told me how much he liked my playing, I almost fainted."

The road to that first date was hardly straightahead, except perhaps in terms of Horn's prodigious musicianship. She started playing piano at the age of four and began formal lessons a year later. Between the ages of 12 and 18, she studied classical music at a special program at Howard University. At 18, she was awarded a scholarship to Juilliard which she was unable to accept because her family couldn't provide her with living expenses. She continued her studies at Howard, but performing at local clubs soon developed into a full-time occupation.

"There was always good music in our home," she continued. "Basie, the Duke, Dinah Washington, Della Reese, Billie Holiday. But my learning about playing jazz started with Erroll Garner and his 'Penthouse Serenade.' I loved Garner, his rhythm was so different. At that time, I was playing for Sunday school at the

church and I got paid. I could purchase records on Sunday but I couldn't play them until Monday. So I bought all these Erroll Garner records and I learned them note-for-note. Well, Garner was the beginning. There were so many beautiful songs he wrote—'Cologne,' 'Pastel.' At the same time, my favorite composers in school were Debussy and Rachmaninoff. So, soon, Ahmad Jamal was my Debussy and Oscar Peterson my Rachmaninoff. I love a lot of



MICHAEL WILDERMAN

SHIRLEY HORN'S EQUIPMENT

Shirley Horn's favorite piano is a Steinway grand ("... there's no other choice"). Horn doesn't own a microphone, so she uses whatever is available, but always insists on having monitors for her trio onstage.

SHIRLEY HORN SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

TUNE IN TOMORROW soundtrack (on two selections)—Columbia 47044
YOU WON'T FORGET ME—Polygram/Verve 847 482
CLOSE ENOUGH FOR LOVE—Polygram/Verve 837 933
I THOUGHT ABOUT YOU—Polygram/Verve 833 235
THE GARDEN OF THE BLUES—Steeplechase SCS-1203
VIOLETS FOR YOUR FURS—Steeplechase SCS-1164
ALL NIGHT LONG—Steeplechase SCS-1157
LOADS OF LOVE/SHIRLEY HORN WITH HORNS—Polygram/Mercury 843 454
EMBERS AND ASHES—Stereocralt (out of print)

with Carmen McRae

SARAH—DEDICATED TO YOU, CARMEN MCRAE—Novus 3110-2-N



MITCHELL SEIDEL

Shirley Horn and Buck Hill with bassist Charles Ables and drummer Steve Williams.

pianists, but those three were my favorites."

Buck Hill, another of D.C.'s local treasures who is also currently enjoying a larger audience, remembers a teenager who used to stand outside the clubs all night listening. "It wasn't long before she was old enough to get inside," stated Hill. "D.C. still had a segregated club scene in the '50s. The black clubs were uptown and the white clubs were downtown—all the jazz was up where we were."

She remembers him as one of the first musicians that let her sit in. "I ended up doing the asking 'cause they couldn't be bothered. They all looked at me—here's this girl, fresh out of classics. I knew absolutely nothing about jazz, but I wanted to learn. And for awhile it seemed like no one would give me a chance. Buck was the nicest one of all."

Both of Horn's sidemen have been with her long enough to see her through from "local treasure" status to more widespread acknowledgement. Charles Ables, her bassist, has been with her for over 20 years. He'd met her through other D.C. musicians—most notably drummer Billy Hart, who had accompanied Horn and played in an r&b band with Ables. "There's a real high level of musicianship," Ables commented, when asked about his and Horn's lengthy partnership. "That's what I attribute it to. I listen to everything she does, so I know exactly what to do. . . . And people in music, we don't always hear about them, but they're always doing something. That was the case with Shirley—she was always busy. Verve and [VP of Polygram Jazz] Richard Seidel deserve a lot of credit for uncovering the gem, so to speak."

Steve Williams, who has been her drummer for eight years, met her while he was playing with Buck Hill. "I've come such a long way since then I can't imagine what she saw that night. What makes the trio work is a very simple thing, but difficult to accomplish—to support her and to make it feel like it's just one person.

"I'm still amazed by her incredible authenticity . . . she's so well-versed. I know many piano players who know all these different styles but don't really *play* the music like she does. And I can't tell you why, except for the fact that she's been touched by something or someone, whatever you want to believe. She's taught me how to think about things to make my playing sound a lot more mature, and to sound hip—she doesn't want it to be slick, she wants it to be hip and she really wants it to swing.

"I can tell when I'm doing what she wants. You should excuse the expression, but it's almost like having sex—you can always tell when it's good because of the person's reaction to you. When it's not good, everyone starts feeling uneasy and restless. So I've learned to just get right in there and swing, because she does that, and she does it instantly."

DB

record & cd reviews

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



J.J. JOHNSON

QUINTERGY—Antilles 422-848 214: *WHEN THE SAINTS GO MARCHING IN; BLUE BOSSA; DOC WAS HERE; BUD'S BLUES; QUINTERGY; LAMENT; WHY INDIANAPOLIS—WHY NOT INDIANAPOLIS?; IT'S ALL RIGHT WITH ME; COPPIN' THE BOP; NEFFERTITI; YOU'VE CHANGED; COMMUTATION.*

Personnel: Johnson, trombone; Ralph Moore, tenor, soprano saxophones; Stanley Cowell, piano; Rufus Reid, bass; Victor Lewis, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

SLIDE HAMPTON

ROOTS—Criss Cross 1015 CD: *PRECIPICE; SOLAR; ROOTS; MAPLE STREET; MY OLD FLAME; JUST IN TIME; PRECIPICE (TAKE 1); BARBADOS. (70:40)*

Personnel: Hampton, trombone; Clifford Jordan, tenor saxophone; Cedar Walton, piano; David Williams, bass; Billy Higgins, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

J.J. Johnson forever stamped bebop trombone in the '40s. His clipped style fit the urgency of the music, and hip trombonists have been appropriating it ever since. Enter Slide Hampton, a follower who nevertheless manages to sound like Slide while sounding like J.J. With that staccato sound in mind, let me say that these albums are similar. Moore is no Jordan, but he is coming along nicely. On the other hand, the rhythm sections are practically interchangeable.

Quintergy is a comeback album for J.J. after years of writing for TV and the movies and, lately, family obligations that pulled him off the scene. You notice an exuberance here, a more sanguine expressiveness—more *sliding* notes and even a growl or two—than before. Like a kid who can't wait to play, he's all over the music. Like the mature technician he is, he controls things with a sense of direction and climax.

This is a live date from the Village Vanguard, and there's an ensemble approach to these performances, not just head-solos-head. "Saints" starts with J.J. over a stop-time. "Bud's Blues" is a trombone-and-bass duet. The title track, among others, features collective improvisation in the horns. Background figures and prearranged rhythm section accents occur throughout the album. In the solo department, J.J.'s a cappella version of "It's All Right With Me," Cowell's bluesy, hard-swinging outing on "Coppin' The Bop," and Lewis' drum fills and exchanges on "Commutation" stand out. J.J. may have been away, but he hasn't slacked off the horn any. (reviewed on cassette)

Slide is no slouch either. His solo on "Solar" is the strongest proof here, with "Just In Time"

a close second. He plays with a burry edge—something J.J. rarely if ever does—on both takes of Jordan's "Precipice," albeit briefly. But mostly it's the trip-hammer execution and thoughtful lines that are his *modus operandi*. "My Old Flame" glows warmly as a ballad performance (equal to J.J.'s "Lament" on *Quintergy*), and the title track is a good example of his harmonically enriched way with the blues. Jordan, a veteran deserving more recognition, has been one of jazz's most impressive tenor men lately. With his supple lines and slightly exotic tone and vibrato, he's true-blue company for Slide. Ditto the rhythm section.

Roots was recorded in 1985. The liner notes do not mention that this may be a reissue, but the last four tracks are noted as not appearing on the LP. Either way, *Roots* is a fine example of solid, mainstream jazz. (reviewed on CD)

—Owen Cordle



CHICK COREA

ALIVE—GRP GRD-9627: *ON GREEN DOLPHIN STREET; HOW DEEP IS THE OCEAN; HUMPTY DUMPTY; SOPHISTICATED LADY; U.M.M.G.; 'ROUND MIDNIGHT; HACKENSACK; MORNING SPRITE. (63:50)*

Personnel: Corea, acoustic piano; John Patitucci, acoustic bass; Dave Weckl, drums.

★ ★ ★ 1/2

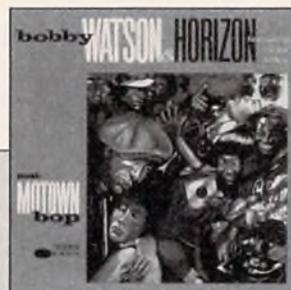
In this retrospective era, it was probably inevitable that Chick Corea would return to the acoustic trio format he'd so brilliantly explored with Miroslav Vitous and Roy Haynes and with Dave Holland and Barry Altschul. But as 1989's *Acoustic Band* (GRP 9582) showed, Chick is no revivalist, his impeccable hard-bop credentials notwithstanding. Unlike his sometime-partner Herbie Hancock, whose personality seems split between jazz and funk, Corea has so seamlessly integrated his fusion innovations with his classical, Latin, and bebop roots that the distinction between acoustic and electric is reduced to a matter of timbre.

The fusion feel comes through loud and clear on *Alive*, thanks largely to Corea's Elektrik Bandmates Patitucci and Weckl, who pump the energy level well past Chick's own usual effervescence. Patitucci's upright seems electrified; nimbly unobtrusive in support, he pins down elusive melodies with hornlike, high-register solos that sizzle off into rapid-fire flurries. Weckl's manic drums are even more dominant on these live takes than on the previous studio session; locking on to his partners' rhythms, he pummels them into the background like some latter-day Buddy Rich.

Standards are emphasized more than be-

fore, with two from the Ellington book, two of Monk's, and one by Irving Berlin. Only "Morning Sprite," one of two Corea originals, and Duke's "Sophisticated Lady" are carried over from the first album. Corea makes them all his own, cruising through whirlwind arpeggios and whimsical modulations with his customary panache, revving ballads into uptempo romps, and shattering familiar tunes into barely recognizable abstracts. But the emotional depth and bite that make Monk's or Ellington's music endure are overshadowed by technical dazzle, and the result, though entertaining and often exhilarating, is ultimately superficial. (reviewed on CD)

—Larry Birnbaum



BOBBY WATSON & HORIZON

POST-MOTOWN BOP—Blue Note CDP 7 95148 2: *THE PUNJAB OF JAVA PO'; BIG GIRLS; FALLING IN LOVE WITH LOVE; 7TH AVENUE; APPOINTMENT IN MILANO; IN CASE YOU MISSED IT; IN A SENTIMENTAL MOOD; SLIPPIN' & SLIDIN'; BAH-DADA-DA-DAH-DAH; LAST CHANCE TO GROOVE. (64:14)*

Personnel: Watson, alto, soprano saxophones; Melton Mustafa, trumpet; Edward Simon, piano; Carroll Dashiell, bass; Victor Lewis, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

While aging survivors and teen prodigies bask in the glow of the bebop revival, a generation of jazz journeymen goes largely unsung. A sterling example is 37-year-old saxophonist/composer Bobby Watson, a Blakey-band alumnus with a dozen previous solo albums to his credit who's honed his chops in the shadows, refining a personal style that combines the insight of maturity with the energy of youth. Having won overdue praise last year for his Blue Note debut, *The Inventor*, he takes an even more straightforward approach—minus synth and steel drums—on *Post-Motown Bop*.

As the title implies, Watson cut his teeth on '60s soul, but his Latin-tinged modal grooves and eely alto and soprano lines are more evocative of middle-period Coltrane than the Temptations. His closest brush with modern funk comes on "In Case You Missed It," where he recasts Ronnie Law's soul-jazz classic "Pressure Sensitive" into a whinnying hard-bop romp. On "Slippin' And Slidin'" he unravels the bluesy thematic strands of Trane's free-blowing "Ascension" and spins them into glassy sheets of sound. Changing pace, he updates Ellington's "In A Sentimental Mood" with bop licks, wry quotes, and a Rollins-esque

a cappella sax coda.

More than just Watson's perfect foil, Melton Mustafa is a star-quality trumpeter who nonchalantly crackles and croons his way through the most tortuous runs. Pianist Edward Simon, who contributes one composition, and drummer Victor Lewis, who contributes three, are equally adept, while bassist Carroll Dashiell is unobtrusively supportive. All five lock onto the same Messenger-ish frequency (the baby-boom boppers' wavelength of choice), but the material often sounds recycled, and the musicians, though deft and assured, break no new ground, content to celebrate the exploits of more venturesome predecessors. (reviewed on CD)
—Larry Birnbaum



LES TÊTES BRULÉES

HOT HEADS—Shanachie 64030: ZA AYI NEYI; NAUOM WOM; NGOLE LIKAS; TÊTES BRULÉES; MAN FO JOB; PAPA; MA MUSIQUE À MOI; CA FAIT MAL; ZANZI COLLECTION. (44:06)

Personnel: Jean-Marie Ahanda, vocals; Théodore Epeme, lead guitar, vocals; André Afata, drums, vocals; Martin Moah, bass, vocals; Roger Bekongo, rhythm guitar, vocals; Charlotte M'Bongo, Myriam Betty, backing vocals; Ron Mezza, trumpet; Dove Kynner, keyboards.

★★★★

Just when I was beginning to feel sated with world beat and overwhelmed by the proliferation of predictable world-music releases, along comes *Les Têtes Brulées* (translated as the Hot Heads) from Cameroon with its delicious Bikutsi rock. The renegade group is as close to West African punk as you can get with its frenetic rhythms (from the Beti tribe in Cameroon), its emphasis on disrupting the musical norm (the band originated as a reaction to the dominance of zouk and makossa in Cameroon), and its outlandish appearance (body paint, torn clothing, and day-glo backpacks). Significantly, the album opens with a festive laugh as the songs are best characterized by their indefatigable energy.

The music is based on the ancient Bikutsi rhythms of the Yaounde rain forest region of western Cameroon. *Les Têtes Brulées* rock those beats with the repetitive staccato electric guitar lines taking the place of the balaphon (African marimba) and smooth out the jagged dance rhythms with its combination abrasive/polished pop-harmony vocals. The Hot Heads use their songs to celebrate an ecstatic love of music and even toast themselves on their explosive signature piece, "Ma Musique à Moi," and the rhythm-charged, self-lionizing number, "Têtes Brulées."

Like the most engaging African pop music, *Hot Heads* succeeds so well because it is so dance crazy. But what makes this album one of the best of the recent world-music batch is the joyful spirit that pervades all nine songs. Even "Papa," which tells a story of the loneliness of a fatherless boy, is a sparkling feast of syncopation, with zipping guitar licks, bubbling percussion, and robust vocal crescendos. (reviewed on CD)

—Dan Ouellette



MARCUS ROBERTS

ALONE WITH THREE GIANTS—RCA Novus 3109: JUNGLE BLUES; MOOD INDIGO; SOLITUDE; I GOT IT BAD; TRINKLE TINKLE; MISTERIOSO; PANNONICA; NEW ORLEANS BLUES; PRELUDE TO A KISS; SHOUT 'EM AUNT TILLIE; BLACK AND TAN FANTASY; MONK'S MOOD; IN WALKED BUD; CREPUSCULE WITH NELLIE; THE CRAVE. (61:43)

Personnel: Roberts, piano.

★★★½

WALTER DAVIS, JR.

IN WALKED THELONIOUS—Jazz Heritage/Mapleshade MHS 512631H: GREEN CHIMNEYS; CREPUSCULE WITH NELLIE; GALLOP'S GALLOP; ASK ME NOW; 'ROUND MIDNIGHT (I); TRINKLE TINKLE; RUBY, MY DEAR; MONK'S MOOD; OFF MINOR; PANNONICA; BYE-YA; UGLY BEAUTY; CRISS CROSS; PORTRAIT OF AN EREMITTE (AKA REFLECTIONS); 'ROUND MIDNIGHT (II). (43:33)

Personnel: Davis, piano.

★★★★½

Reviewing these two solo albums back-to-back is a daunting proposition—but nowhere near as challenging as the projects these two wholly different artists set up for themselves. Walter Davis, Jr. (who died last June at the age of 57) chose to perform an entire album of Monk, who was both mentor and friend to Davis when he was a teenager. Marcus Roberts compiled a collection of works by Jelly Roll Morton, Ellington, and Monk, trying to evoke the historical lineage between this fundamental triumvirate. The nature of the material, compounded by the particulars of solo jazz piano performance—requiring one to be a melodist, orchestrator, improviser, and great storyteller simultaneously—render both of these projects extremely ambitious.

Sharp contrasts and provocative reflections emerged from the repeated listenings accorded each album. Here's Davis, who, though never considered an innovator himself, played his first gig at the Apollo with Bird and was a steadfast accompanist to a pantheon of jazz giants. By virtue of his age, his solo piano

style is more immediately informed by the grandeur of a Garner or the wit of a Waller. Enter Roberts, almost 40 years later, who garnered attention through school programs and jazz competitions. He was picked up by none other than Wynton Marsalis during a golden moment in jazz that Marsalis helped to create. The two pianists realize their ambitions with different degrees of success.

Age, experience, and authenticity are on Davis' side. His renditions stick closely to Monk's compositions. There are a few well-integrated choruses, an adept fill here and there, but nothing extraneous. Davis' substantive touch and clarity of vision delineate the musical architecture that is so uniquely Monk's. Without being imitative, Davis' work here seems naturally infused with Monk's spirit. The results are remarkably original and powerful. (Jazz Heritage, 1710 Highway 35, Ocean NJ 07712)

Roberts has already proven himself a highly sensitive player with a lot of technical command. Those qualities are evident here, as well as his abilities as a gorgeous colorist. But he has yet to totally inhabit this material. Some of his efforts sound a little too precious, too much like jazz etudes. This kind of project does reveal the high standards Roberts sets for himself. He's on the right track—towards fusing the rich stylistic inheritance he's begun to grasp into a true style of his own. (reviewed on CD)
—Stephanie Stein



CLAUS OGERMAN

FEATURING MICHAEL BRECKER—GRP GRD-9632: CORFU; LYRICOSMOS; AFTER THE FIGHT; AODONIA; BOULEVARD TRISTESSE. (43:49)

Personnel: Brecker, tenor saxophone (cuts 1-4); Randy Brecker, trumpet (1,2,4), flugelhorn (4); Robben Ford (1,5), Dean Parks (1-4), guitar; Alan Pasqua, keyboards (1-4); Marcus Miller (1,2), Abraham Laboriel (3,4), Eddie Gomez (5), bass; Vinnie Colaiuta (1-4), Steve Gadd (5), drums; Paulinho Da Costa, percussion (1-4); an unidentified orchestra.

★★★

Chances are you've heard Claus Ogerman's work, even if his guttural name draws a blank. The German native contributed orchestrations to a slew of Creed Taylor-produced albums on the Verve label in the '60s, including pop-jazz titles headlined by Wes Montgomery and Cal Tjader. Down through the years, he's done arrangements for, among others, Frank Sinatra, Sarah Vaughan, and George "Breezin'" Benson. Alas, brickbats flew his way at nearly every turn as his charts tended to be frigid

CONTINUED ON PAGE 35

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 32
and saccharin.

Arranger and composer Ogerman has aspired the past decade to a modest kind of respectability on the basis of a jazz-related ingenuity. On *Featuring*, he uses an orchestra to get celestial or disquieting textures that often commingle with mood-mirroring electric-jazz sonorities conjured up by Marcus Miller, Alan Pasqua, and others. The arrangements stimulate tenorist Mike Brecker (who has collaborated previously with Ogerman) into creative action—most effectively on a questing "Lyricosmos" and a consonant yet tense composition named after a Greek festival, "Adonia." On "Corfu," written for a lovely Greek isle, Brecker counterpoises both Ogerman's orchestral drift into triteness and the studio band's demi-funk gauziness.

The lone track without Brecker, "Boulevard Tristesse," somewhat suggestive of Miles and Gil Evans' *Sketches Of Spain*, pleases for how warmly guitarist Robben Ford handles his written-out part as the sections of the orchestra (not to mention bassist Eddie Gomez and drummer Steve Gadd) shadow him. All told, an agreeable album. (reviewed on cassette) —*Frank-John Hadley*



GRATEFUL DEAD

WITHOUT A NET—Arista ACD2-8634: *FEEL LIKE A STRANGER; MISSISSIPPI HALF-STEP UPTOWN TOODELOO; WALKIN' BLUES; ALTHEA; CASSIDY; BIRD SONG; LET IT GROW; CHINA CAT SUNFLOWER// KNOW YOU RIDER; LOOKS LIKE RAIN; EYES OF THE WORLD; VICTIM OR THE CRIME; HELP ON THE WAY/SUPKNOT// FRANKLIN'S TOWER; ONE MORE SATURDAY NIGHT; DEAR MR. FANTASY.* (59:40/72:21)

Personnel: Jerry Garcia, lead guitar, vocals; Mickey Hart, Bill Kreutzmann, drums; Phil Lesh, bass; Brent Mydland, keyboards, vocals; Bob Weir, rhythm guitar, vocals; Branford Marsalis, tenor and soprano saxophones (cut 10).

★ ★ 1/2

Contrary to the vast majority of pop artists, the Grateful Dead are a band that must be experienced in concert. From the beginning (1965-'66), "playing in the band" with extended, live improvisation—not turning out a heavily-produced and edited piece of music—has been their forte. So, it stands to reason, the two-CD, live *Without A Net* ought to be a real kick-ass affair. Yes? Well, not exactly.

The mediocre results are due, in part, to the late Brent Mydland, a marginal talent who joined the band in '79 and offered little more than (excuse the expression) dead weight. Ever since harpist/singer/organist Ron "Pigpen" McKernan kicked in 1973, an essential

element to the band's style—gritty, down-home, gutbucket blues—has been missing. (Pigpen's replacement, the late—no kidding—Keith Godchaux did provide solid support in a different vein.) Mydland's hokey, quaint, c&w frills mixed with drippy synths and obnoxious vocals (Traffic fans, avoid "Dear Mr. Fantasy") all suggested a turn towards self-parody for the Dead.

As discouraging as Mydland's touch was, what's happened to Mickey Hart and Billy Kreutzmann over the years serves as *the* major disappointment. Having written the book on two-drummer rock & roll, featuring aggressive, almost marching-band rhythms and independent and complementary styles, the "Rhythm Devils" have settled into a followers role, playing behind the beat as one synchronized drum machine à la the Doobie Brothers. Except for brief episodes, the recorded drumming for the Dead has yet to regain the brilliance it had when Hart left the band for four years in '71. Maybe it's the way the two are recorded nowadays. There *are* those occasional moments when Mickey gets off his chair and bangs on assorted percussion instruments. And granted, the current arrangements seem to place the drummers at bay. Nonetheless, the restlessness and fire of yesteryear appears to be but a memory. Oh well.

Speaking of fire, *Without A Net* shows that Bob Weir has it, and Jerry Garcia doesn't. Generally, the songs alternate between the two composers singing their songs, including an inspired version of Robert Johnson's "Walkin' Blues" sung by Weir. In fairness to Garcia, the concert material here was recorded within earshot (10/89-4/90) of his near-fatal overdose from drugs from a few years back. Jerry sings his heart out, however strained and haggard, and his playing does have its moments—check out his rough-edged guitar work on Weir's "Victim Or The Crime," or the band's fine, three-minute jam on "Cassidy." Unfortunately, the band's admirable risk-taking in jams still results in a fair amount of boring, aimless meandering.

Branford Marsalis' interesting contributions to the 16-minute "Eyes Of The World" include alternating tenor and soprano playing in a supportive, yet convincing, soul-sax groove. Would've like to have heard him this past New Year's Eve playing *all night* with the Dead.

Final gripes and grunts: Spacing between songs is brief, nothing like a real Dead show. The audience sounds like they were recorded through a wall. The band mercifully avoids their recent "hits" "Touch Of Grey" and "Hell In A Bucket." Most of the time, the Dead, paradoxically, sound relaxed (too relaxed), yet stiff and arthritic. When these old farts do get it up, as during "Let It Grow"'s purposeful and fiery five-minute jam, the spirit is rekindled with Garcia's distinctive guitar sound leading the way.

Aging gracefully, with a style to match, may mean accepting some unwelcome limitations all around. Then again, there's word that with Mydland gone (replaced by ex-Tube Vince Welnick) and Garcia on the mend, the Dead have come back to life. As for *Without A Net*, the cards on the table bear witness to a former cross-country train that's entropied into a crosstown trolley. (reviewed on CD)

—*John Ephland*

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J.B.'s BLUES

by Kurt Baacke

As a title, *Messing With The Blues* (Polydor 847 258-2; 55:03/55:22: ★★★★★) is a bit understated for someone as accomplished as **James Brown**. J.B. messes with music like Thomas Edison messed with electricity. For us all, things haven't been quite the same since.

But even geniuses have their roots, and this double CD explores three decades (1957-'75) and three record labels (King, Smash, and Polydor) of unique blues interpretations that influenced and inspired the Godfather of Soul. Fortunately, Brown had not forgotten his roots, as the opening cut, "Like It Is, Like It Was (The Blues)," from '72, reminds us. This simmering, minor-key rap features him with the J.B.s reflecting on and embracing the hardships of his life.

Living the blues does have its payback, as he cashes in with the big-band material recorded for Smash Records during the mid-'60s. The technicolor Sammy Lowe arrangements of standards by Erskine Hawkins, Louis Jordan, and Chuck Willis are a revelation. In particular, "Don't Cry Baby" is an intoxicating, high-voltage kick of big-band brass, steamy organ, shimmering guitar, and swooning vocalists.



James Brown: transforming the blues

Remembering your roots also keeps you in touch with your heart, a heart that can almost be heard beating on the Bullmoose Jackson hit, "I Love You, Yes I Do." Recorded for King Records, this tender ballad is affectionately accompanied by Les Buie's crisp guitar and Bobby Byrd's lush organ, while Brown carefully caresses the melody. The decision to record a tribute album—also for King—to Little Willie John must have come from the heart as well. Ironically, Brown, himself currently in prison,

had campaigned for the singer's release from prison before he died behind bars in 1968. Included here are two Little Willie John hits, "Suffering With The Blues" and "Talk To Me, Talk To Me." The latter, as the liner notes indicate, is the one song Brown asked to be included in this collection. But on "The Bells," Billy Ward's chilling composition about the death of a lover, I worried that James' heart might actually stop. The sparse accompaniment, featuring J.C. Davis' haunting tenor, forms a bleak background for Brown's weeping falsetto. His sorrow and self-pity are almost too much for him to bear, as he sobs, "ashes to ashes, dust to dust." Brown's intensity transforms the blues into tragedy.

Brown would later transform the music of a generation of black Americans by addressing relevant and controversial social issues. Following his move to Polydor in the early '70s, he formed a band called the J.B.s. Included were former associates Maceo Parker and St. Clair Pinckney on alto and tenor saxes, and new member Fred Wesley on trombone. This band gave Brown a leaner sound with a sharper edge to it. Their cover of "Kansas City ('75)" has a gritty, "urban" feel to it, while their version of "Honky Tonk (Parts I & II)" sounds more like a party instead of a recording session. If I didn't know better, I'd swear they were only messing around. **DB**



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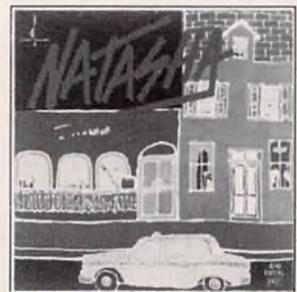
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AYLER AND BEYOND

by Bill Shoemaker

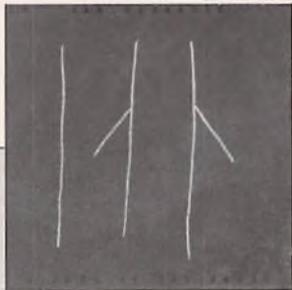
Even more than Ornette Coleman, **Albert Ayler** has become the demarcating figure in jazz's evolution during the past 30 years. Early in his tragically shortened career, Ayler dispensed with all semblance of structure and conventional technique, creating a forceful music of pure sonic energy from scratch. *The First Recording Vol. 2* (DIW DIW-349; 32:12: ★★), previously unavailable performances from the much-discussed 1962 Stockholm session, reveals Ayler groping his way through "Softly As In A Morning Sunrise," "I Didn't Know What Time It Was," "Moanin'," and "Good Bait," occasionally lurching into the unbridled glories that marked his mature work. Given the tenorist's emerging abilities, the moot contributions of bassist Torbjorn Hultcrantz and drummer Sune Spangberg, and the weak recording quality, *First Recording Vol. 2* can only be recommended to Ayler's devotees.

David Murray is a major beneficiary of Ayler's legacy; in fact, a collection like Murray's *Spirituals* (DIW DIW-841; 48:16: ★★) would be almost inconceivable had not Ayler revitalized both the idiom and fervor of the spiritual in his own work. There is an infectious exuberance to Murray's takes on both the traditional materials and the house-rocking originals. His calls to revelry are taken up by pianist Dave Burrell, bassist Fred Hopkins, and drummer Ralph Peterson, Jr., who unflinchingly keep the holy waters bubbling hot. This is Murray's fourth album with this unit and is by far their most cogent effort yet.

Imagine, if you can, Ayler's late forays into rock with guitarist James blood Ulmer wielding his harmolodic ax. Ulmer and Murray's partnership in **Music Revelation Ensemble** is a vital extension of Ayler's uneven experiments in electric ecstasy. One of Ulmer's most straight-up programs for getting down, *Electric Jazz* (DIW DIW-839; 48:16: ★★) is drenched with seam-splitting no-wave funk. In addition to the randy work of Murray and Ulmer, the guitarist's hook-filled heads are forcefully propelled by the underheralded team of bassist Amin Ali and drummer Cornell Rochester. As much as loft music meltdowns, *Electric Jazz* is a part of the Ayler legacy.

Ulmer's venture with another strong, post-Ayler tenorist, George Adams, and two stalwarts of '60s free jazz, drummer Rashied Ali and bassist Sirone, lacks the luster and cohesion of Music Revelation Ensemble. As **Phalanx**, these four musicians are at their most cogent when they cut loose, improvising with intensity. Without a well-oiled, compositionally-based identity, Phalanx's *In Touch* (DIW DIW-826; 52:55: ★★) has the aural equivalent of a bad clutch. Yet, when Phalanx finally labors into high gear, they exhibit impressive power. (all reviewed on CD)

DB



JAN GARBAREK

I TOOK UP THE RUNES—ECM 843 850-2: *GULA GULA; MOLDE CANTICLE (PARTS 1-5); HIS EYES WERE SUNS; I TOOK UP THE RUNES; BUENO HORA, BUENOS VIENTOS; RAHKKI SRUVVIS.* (61:39)

Personnel: Garbarek, soprano and tenor saxophones; Rainer Brüninghaus, piano; Eberhard Weber, bass; Nana Vasconcelos, percussion; Manu Katché, drums; Ingor Antte Ailu Gaup, voice (cuts 7, 10); Bugge Wesseltoft, synthesizer ("Molde Canticle").

★ ★ ★

About half of this compelling album captures the classic ECM aesthetic—haunting, introspective with a touch of melancholy, spacious and organic-sounding. And what else would you expect from this lineup, a virtual ECM all-star band?

The surprise here is the presence of a big backbeat, supplied on a few cuts by drummer Manu Katché (a slamming, rock drummer whose credits include Peter Gabriel, Sting, and Joni Mitchell). His solid 4/4 playing on Part 4 of the dramatic "Molde Canticle" and the stirring title cut is by far the meatiest, funkier set of grooves that Garbarek has had to deal with in his long and distinguished career at ECM. He responds by digging in and delivering some of his most passionate tenor playing in years. Katché also adds muscular backbeats on Parts 2 and 5 of "Molde Canticle." (ECM is sending out a special-edition CD of these four rhythmic tracks only to radio programmers in hopes of getting Garbarek some airplay.)

While Katché provides the tension, Rainer Brüninghaus offers the release with his delicate, colorist approach to piano, which is showcased most effectively on the dark ballad "Bueno Hora, Buenos Vientos." And bassist Weber alternates between anchoring the groove (as he does so strongly on the funky Part 4 of the "Canticle") and stepping out as a second lead voice (Part 3).

The opening number, a mournful melody called "Gula Gula," is the link between this album and Garbarek's last project, a collection of medieval Nordic folk songs entitled *Rosentole* (ECM 839 293). And on two tracks, "His Eyes Were Suns" and "Rahkki Sruvvis," Ingor Antte Ailu Gaup lends a bit of Lapp culture with his hearty handclapping and folkloric singing accompanied by Nana Vasconcelos on percussion, recalling some of the organic chant-jams of the ECM group Codona.

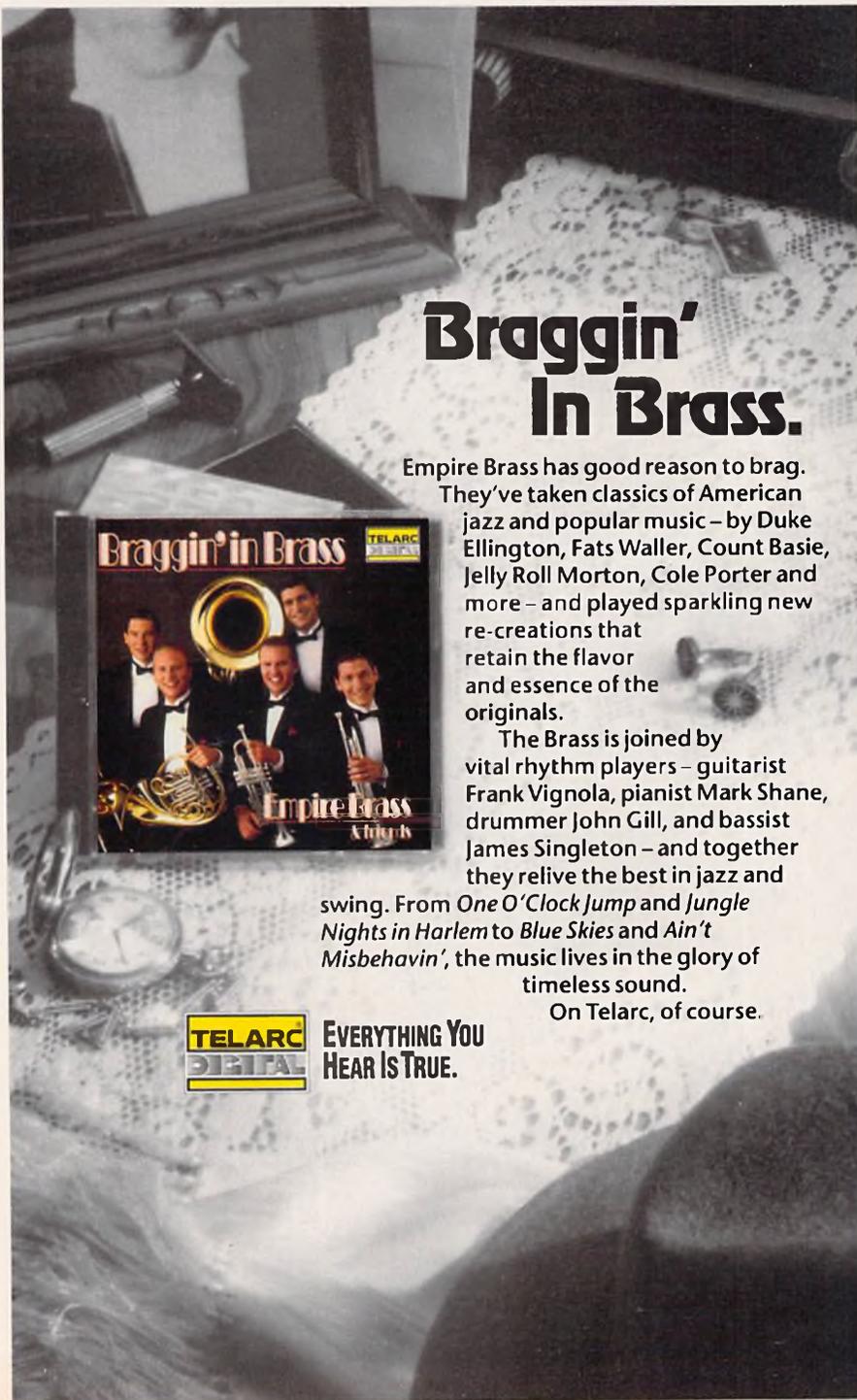
Perhaps his earthiest offering to date, *I Took Up The Runes* may finally give those who have been at odds with Garbarek's ascetic sensibilities something to grab onto. (reviewed on CD)
—Bill Milkowski



MONTE CROFT

SURVIVAL OF THE SPIRIT—Columbia CK 46191: *TAKE ONE STEP; SURRENDER, OPUS 1; ELLA, EDDIE, JON AND BETTY; DIVINE; RUMBLE, YOUNG MAN, RUMBLE; JAN; PUNT; DEDICATED TO YOU; TIME WOULD WAIT; BEIJING; CHARADES; THE RUBICON SONG; I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TIME IT WAS.* (67:48)
Personnel: Croft, vibes, vocals, piano (cut 9); Sam Newsome (5), Lance Bryant (6, 7), tenor saxophone; Bruce Barth, Mulgrew Miller (4), piano; Peter Washington, bass; Gene Jackson, drums; strings (8, 9).

★ ★ ★



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I'm uncomfortable with jazz and pop on the same album. It makes me wonder where the loyalty lies. That's the problem with this album. Is Croft the Bags and Hutcherson descendant, or is he the Stevie Wonder-sounding pop singer? Or am I echoing a jealous prejudice against multiple talents?

Things begin with a mixture: a vocal chorus like Take 6, a soulful Croft lead (and later scat) vocal, a brief mallet solo. No harm done, and then "Surrender," an atmospheric original that has a '60s ring to it, introduces the vibes connection. Next, jazz-vocal time, with imitations of Ella, et al. So far, so good, but then

"Divine" brings on the soul-pop persona, and Croft is ultimately heavy-handed, as well as out of tune near the end.

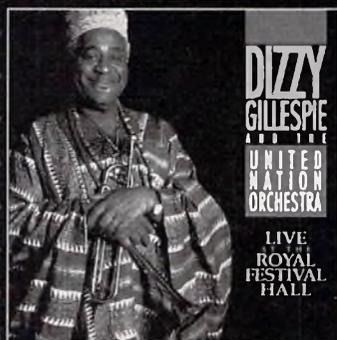
Without continuing this play-by-play, suffice it to say that the jazz tracks henceforth are "Rumble," "Punt," "Beijing," "Charades," and "I Didn't Know What Time It Was." These demonstrate that Croft can swing hard, play the interval game through Monkish changes, cook uptempo, and essay a shimmering ballad solo. Moreover, there's some lean, lithe tenor here (Newsome on "Rumble," Bryant on "Punt"), with the blend of vibes and tenor reminiscent of Hutcherson and Harold Land. These are

satisfying cuts, albeit conservative (as is most of today's neo-mainstream jazz).

It's harder to be sold on Croft the vocalist. His voice is high-pitched and not especially jazzy, although he makes his point on "Ella" and "Rubicon."

Regarding the rating, let's make it two stars for the vocal tracks (conceptually and vocally), three-and-a-half for the vibes-and-jazz, and average them at three. (reviewed on CD)

—Owen Cordle



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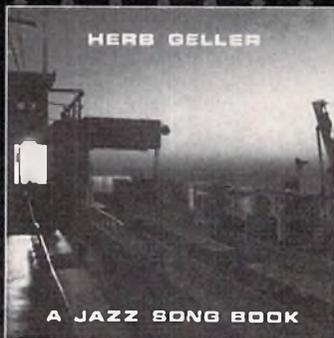
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CHARLES BROWN

ALL MY LIFE—Bullseye Blues/Rounder CD BB 9501: *EARLY IN THE MORNING; FOOL'S PARADISE; BAD BAD WHISKEY; WHEN THE SUN COMES OUT; NOBODY KNOWS THE TROUBLE I'VE SEEN; THAT'S A PRETTY GOOD LOVE; A VIRUS CALLED THE BLUES; SEVEN LONG DAYS; JOYCE'S BOOGIE; TROUBLE BLUES; TELL ME WHO; ALL MY LIFE; TOO LATE.* (52:28)

Personnel: Brown, piano and vocals, organ (cuts 7,9); Danny Caron, guitar; Earl May, acoustic bass; Keith Copeland, drums; Clifford Solomon, alto and tenor saxes; Ron Levy, organ (6, 9, 11); Dr. John, vocal (7), piano (6, 7), organ (2); Ruth Brown, vocal (11); Kenny Blevins, drums (6); Heywood Henry (8, 11), David Sholl (6, 9), baritone sax; "Sax" Gordon, tenor sax (9).

★★★★

This Bullseye debut follows along the same lines as *One More For The Road*, Charles Brown's 1986 comeback album for Blue Side Records, which was later licensed to Alligator. Full of acoustic blues ballads and jump numbers done up in his trademark mellow style, *All My Life* continues the musical legacy of the man who began charting hits back in 1946.

A consummate entertainer, Brown knows how to deliver a blues lyric with flair as well as feeling. His husky, crooning vocals are warm and inviting; and yet, there is a hint of pain and misery, particularly on laments like "Fool's Paradise," his profoundly mournful "Trouble Blues," and a funereal arrangement of "Nobody Knows The Trouble I've Seen." On the lighter side is good-timey material like Albert Ammons' "Bad Bad Whiskey," the jaunty shuffle of "Seven Long Days," and a playful original, "Tell Me Who," his vocal tête-à-tête with the great Ruth Brown.

Brown has penned some great songs in the past 40 years ("Driftin' Blues," "Merry Christmas Baby") and he's come up with another winner in "A Virus Called The Blues," a vocal duet in which partner Dr. John sings, "All along I detected, I was infected"

enja

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 42

hat

ZORN ON ZORN

"I think it's an important thing for a musician to have an overview, something that remains consistent throughout your whole life. You have one basic idea, one basic way of looking at this world, one basic way of putting music together.

I developed mine very early on—the idea of working with blocks. At first maybe the blocks were more like just blocks of sound... noisy, improvisational statements, but eventually it came back to using genre as musical notes and moving these blocks of genre around...

COBRA (hat Art CD 2-6040), for me, is like a spectacle situation you know, like a sport. But ultimately that is a distraction for me because it really is meant to be heard, it's music. I don't want to take anything away from the live performance aspects... but ultimately we are involved in making music.

The same thing is true when I work in the studio, like the Sato Michihiro project (RODAN, hat Art CD 6015). Even when I'm working in a NEWS FOR LULU (hat Art CD 6005) and MORE NEWS FOR LULU (hat Art CD 6055) situation, where I think of myself more as a textural player—which say Dolphy was—someone who works with timbre, playing a fast phrase, a slow phrase, a high phrase, a low phrase, trying to work one phrase against one another... I'm a composer who happens to play saxophone and who uses that at times to express my ideas.

So I have a wide variety of stuff going on, and these are all different elements of the way I work. Ever since I was small, I wrote classical oriented stuff, I played in a surf band, I improvised... I mean, I did a wide range of musical activities, and I think that's something very common in our generation... we're interested in many kinds of music, we're basically rootless."

(as told to Art Lange, August 1990)

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 40

Brown's piano work throughout this project is a study in boogie-woogie elegance, part Pete Johnson, part Teddy Wilson. On schmaltzy fare like "When The Sun Comes Out" and the title cut, he embellishes at the keyboard with ornamental flourishes. And on driving numbers like the lone instrumental, "Joyce's Boogie," he rolls 'em.

As always, Brown surrounds himself with top-shelf sidemen. Earl May's acoustic bass anchors the session and adds warmth while

Danny Caron's soulful guitar work (coming out of the Tiny Grimes-Billy Butler school) stands out on the slow blues of "Early In The Morning," the bouyant title cut, and the jump blues of "Too Late" (a CD bonus track). Another real treat is Clifford Solomon's breathy tenor work on the mellow "Fool's Paradise."

He may have fell out of favor in the '60s, but he's back in the '90s. Suave and soulful, earthy and elegant, Charles Brown, at age 68, keeps on doing his thing. (reviewed on CD)

—Bill Milkowski

MIDDLE-EAST HOEDOWN

by Gene Santoro

World music—as the music biz calls any sound not made in the U.S. or U.K.—is a growth industry. *Billboard* now has a separate chart for it, acknowledging its 4 percent-plus market share of U.S. sales—which puts it up (or down) there with jazz. But even more than the rubric jazz, this single name cloaks a riot of distinct genres. When regional musics collide with other cultures, they can warp both themselves and their new ingredients in fascinating ways. Not all the hybrids exploding across the globe will produce lasting effects, but more important for now are the wellsprings of invention they're tapping and freeing. It's not a good time for cultural police who want their formats neat and clean and defined. Out there, music is a raggedy mess.

This first installment of a three-part series touches on the Islamic-influenced cultures of the Mideast and North Africa; next month's will bring South and West Africa, and the last will look at the Caribbean and South America. Obviously, these are only introductions; readers can follow up by checking out books like *The Da Capo Guide To Contemporary African Music* (Da Capo) and *Hot Sauces: Latin and Caribbean Pop* (William Morrow).

The Middle East and North Africa are the cradles of Islam, and the regional cultures that have developed there reflect that. Islam has a rich musical heritage: trance-inducing drones, skipping dance beats, swerving microtones, and shivering scoops and hairpin dips. Meeting first with indigenous customs and now with American sounds, it's developing as many twists as an old slinky.

Pakistan has been a trader's crossroads for millenia; everyone from the Persians and Indians to the Mongols have swept through and left cultural traces. Sufism, the mystical branch of Islam, holds large sway there. Its *gawwali* music puts poems that are robustly sung with deliberately wobbly pitches and heartfelt wails and stunning melismas galore to a combination of thumping percussion and drones supplied by either string instruments or (more usually these days) a small harmonium. **Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan** is quite simply the full-throated master of *gawwali*. *Shehen-Shah* (Real World/Virgin 91300: ★★★★★) captures the unfolding, mesmerizing effect of Sufi ecstasy. Khan plays call-and-response with a choir of eight, a harmonium, and a tabla. Together, they ride rising and falling emotional waves, beckoning drones, and radical percussion breakdowns. The **Sabri Brothers** also hail from Pakistan; *Ya Habib* (Real World/Virgin 91346: ★★★★★) offers another glimpse of the hypnotic, searching sound so central to both secular and religious aspects of Sufi life.

Despite civil war and famine, Ethiopia is a cauldron of cultural activity. Settled by migrants from the Middle East, a center of a Christian rite since the third century, a founding member of the Organization of African States, Ethiopia is where many cultures intersect—and its contemporary music reflects that. There are, for example, the loping beats and surging horns of '60s U.S. soul music in **Aster Awe-**

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ke's music; via her volcanic voice that claws at the edge of possession as it stabs between the well-tempered cracks and intertwines easily with traditional Ethiopian airs. *Aster* (Columbia CK 46848; 50:20: ★★★★★) is a good picture. Since 1974, **Mahmoud Ahmed** has been one of the country's prime singers; now, with *Ere Mela Mela* (Hannibal 1354; 50:47: ★★★★★), non-Ethiopians get a taste of his talent. There's a lot of r&b in Ahmed's sound; the gutsy saxes riffing around the coiled melodies sometimes evoke a Moslem James Brown. (both reviewed on CD)

Modern—that is, post-Nasser—Egyptian pop falls into two main categories. *Al jeel* folds Bedouin, Nubian, and Egyptian beats into Western dancefloor techno-pop; *shaabi* is a kind of Egyptian working-class ghetto blues, where have-nots vent their often punning political protests over coarser sounds. *Yalla—Hitlist Egypt* (Mango 539 873: ★★★) showcases suggestive variants of both, including a banned-in-Egypt rap track.

Moroccan *Gnawa* music is about trances; as in *santeria*, or voodoo, the music is meant to open the participant's consciousness to possession by an invoked divinity. **Hassan Hakmoun's Moroccan Gnawi Songs** (World Music Institute: ★★★½) isn't that well recorded, but it captures some of the whirling-dervish energy Hassan provides (who normally performs with his brother on metal castanets; the duo twirl their *tez's* tails and dance acrobatically) on *sintir*, a one-stringed bass lute, and slightly raspy, slippery vocals that point to the Islamic roots of Afro-poppers like Youssou N'Dour and Salif Keita. The sampler called *Gnawa Music Of Marrakesh* (Axiom 539 881; 48:37: ★★★★★) serves up excellent snippets of this trance music in its fuller-blooded state, from drum-corps fusillades to five-piece mowdowns. (reviewed on CD)

Rai, the pop sound of Algeria, has taken Europe by storm over the last few years. A synthesis of Moroccan, French, and Spanish elements, *rai* draws on rebellious postures, secular themes like love and sex, traditional beats somewhat funkified, melodies embellished by cascading quavers and stuttering melismas, electric guitars and synthesizers and horns, and disco and funk touches. *Rai* was banned by the government for the same reasons that moved lots of Americans to burn early rock & roll records. All *rai* singers are called *cheb* (males) or *chaba* (females), which roughly means youngster; it underlines their youthful outsider status.

Three of *rai's* biggest stars have very different discs out. **Cheb Mami's Prince Of Rai** (Shanachie 64013: ★★★★★) finds his thin, ululating voice frequently shadowed by super-vibrato violin; the stripped-down production keeps it close to *rai's* acoustic ancestors. **Cheb Khaled** and arranger/producer **Safy Boutella** teamed up for *Kutche* (Capitol/Intuition C1-90934: ★★★★★), which emphasizes *rai's* whipsaw funk in denser arrangements behind Khaled's quavery and rough-hewn but powerfully evocative singing. The yearning, throaty, call-and-response vocals of **Chaba Fadela** and **Cheb Sahraoui** surge through the state-of-the-art *Hana Hana* (Mango 539 856: ★★★★★), backed by relentless cross-rhythms, raucous guitars, floating synths, and sharp-creased horns. (all reviewed on LP except where noted)

DB



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record & cd reviews



BARBARA DENNERLEIN

HOT STUFF—enja R2 79654: *HOT STUFF*; *WOW!*; *TOP SECRET*; *BIRTHDAY BLUES*; *POLAR LIGHTS*; *KILLER JOE*; *MY INVITATION*; *SEVEN STEPS TO HEAVEN*; *TOSCANIAN SUNSET*. (58:12)

Personnel: Dennerlein, organ, synthesizers; Mitch Watkins, guitar; Andy Sheppard, tenor sax; Mark Mondesir, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

JOEY DE FRANCESCO

PART III—Columbia 47063: *DR. JEKYLL*; *END OF A LOVE AFFAIR*; *O.E.I.*; *RHYTHM-A-NING*; *WOOKIE'S CORNER*; *WHAT I SEE*; *DON'T STOP ME NOW*; *IF I WERE A BELL*; *WALTZ FOR DAD*; *BLUE IN GREEN*; *GUTBUCKET BLUES*.

Personnel: De Francesco, organ, piano (cuts 3, 8), trumpet (3, 6, 7); Paul Bollenback, guitar; Glenn Guidone, tenor sax; Robert Landham, alto sax; J.R. "Big Jim" Henry, trumpet; Byron "Wookie" Landham, drums; Christian McBride, acoustic bass (3, 8); Ted Moore, percussion (6); John De Francesco, organ (11).

★ ★ ★ ★

Two very different takes on the Hammond B-3 organ. De Francesco is the keeper of the Philadelphia flame, Dennerlein is the renegade

stylist from Munich. Both are accomplished players with impressive chops. Both revere Jimmy Smith and Larry Young. Joey D is still paying homage to the early-'60s Philly lounge tradition while Barbara D is scoping out new territory on *Hot Stuff*.

Part III is De Francesco's third and most satisfying album yet. A focused band effort, held together by the supple swing and alluring brushwork of young drummer Byron "Wookie" Landham, it not only highlights Joey's blatant Jimmy Smithisms ("Wookie's Corner," "Gutbucket Blues") but offers a few surprises along the way. Like his lyrical, muted trumpet playing on "O.E.I.," in which the kid invokes his former boss, Miles Davis. Another treat is the excellent guitar work of Paul Bollenback, whose legato burn and driving sense of swing help crank this session up a notch. The sparks fly between Paul and Joey D on Jackie McLean's "Dr. Jekyll" and Monk's "Rhythm-A-Ning," both uptempo vehicles that also feature some spirited battles between tenorman Glenn Guidone and alto player Robert Landham. Bollenback adds some virtuosic turns on "Blue In Green."

A swinging piano trio rendition of "If I Were A Bell" showcases the talents of another noteworthy newcomer, bassist Christian McBride, while the earthy "Gutbucket Blues" highlights the talents of a noteworthy old-timer, Papa John De Francesco, a B-3 burner from way back. Side by side, father and son tear it up in classic Philly fashion. (reviewed on cassette)

Barbara Dennerlein takes a more modernist approach on *Hot Stuff*. By cleverly incorporating MIDI technology into her B-3 setup (her footpedals trigger uncannily accurate upright bass samples), she is investigating ways to develop the instrument and stretch the boundaries of the idiom. Stylistically, she lies somewhere between Carla Bley and Larry Young, with a few allusions to the more frantic fusion stylings of Jan Hammer (circa 1974's *Timeless* on ECM), particularly on the 10-minute title cut and the dark, probing "Polar Lights."

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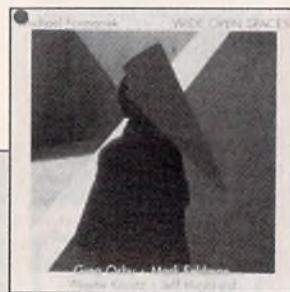
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MICHAEL FORMANEK

WIDE OPEN SPACES—Enja R2 79648: *EDGE TO EDGE; YAHOO JUSTICE; FANTASY SCAPE; WIDE OPEN SPACES; THE SAGE; CLOAK AND DAGGER; WILD DREAMS; COFFEE TIME; HOME, AT HOME; SLOTHDANCING; OUTERLUDE; RAZING WALLS; ANCESTRAL VOICES; EDGE TO EDGE; OPEN DOOR.* (55:02)

Personnel: Formanek, bass; Wayne Krantz, guitar; Greg Osby, alto and soprano saxes; Mark Feldman, violin; Jeff Hirshfield, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

WAYNE KRANTZ

SIGNALS—Enja R2 79642: *ALLIANCE; FAITH IN THE PROCESS; ONE OF TWO; DON'T TELL ME; AS IS; SIGNALS; SOSSIFY; YOU'RE A WOMAN; MUSIC ROOM; TWO OF TWO; FOR SUSAN.* (41:49)

Personnel: Krantz, guitar; Jim Beard, keyboards (cuts 2,4,6); Anthony Jackson, contra-bass guitar (2,4,6); Dennis Chambers, drums (2,4,6); Don Alias, percussion (1,7); Hiram Bullock, bass, drum program (8); Leni Stern, guitar (5).

★ ★ ★ ★ 1/2

The Enja label has a couple winners here. Good musical ideas and guts, too, make for a very impressive debut from guitarist Wayne Krantz. The album opener is a foreshadowing of things to come—a smoking duet with the versatile, groove-loving Don Alias on congas. It's as exciting as something you'd have heard at a Mahavishnu Orchestra concert in the '70s. And as with everything else on *Signals*, it has shape, drive, and dynamics.

Krantz doesn't demand that a lot be going

on in his music all the time. He uses spacious settings in establishing moods just like John Scofield does. It's pretty much wide open, and the guitarist does all kinds of things with his Strat. On "Don't Tell Me," he rips, pulling the strings to get a percussive effect, and sails all over the fretboard. Maybe he's inspired by the new Rhythm Section of Doom—Anthony Jackson and Dennis Chambers. Whew! Keyboardist Jim Beard continues his fine work here. And guest shots by Hiram Bullock (creating his own rhythm section on bass and drum machine) and Leni Stern are strong. But Krantz is the true star of the show. Whether it's an ensemble piece where everyone gets plenty of space to be themselves, or solo guitar, his stamp is clearly heard on everything.

As inspired, texturally varied, and rich in tonal colors as Krantz's album is, bassist Michael Formanek's new release almost matches it. Formanek enjoys playing the acoustic bass in many different ways. His bowing and general versatility make him come off like a young Richard Davis at times.

On "Wild Dreams," Mark Feldman's violin and Formanek's bowed bass go in half-time step to the burning rhythm section. On "Coffee Time," Formanek plucks his strings over a laid-back, second-line-type drum beat. Wayne Krantz gives focus to "Home, At Home." "Sloth-dancing" is what you might imagine it to sound like—the violin solo over the slipping, stumbling rhythm section is comical. Greg Osby does impressive sax work interpreting MF's loose, conceptual pieces. Like the leader, Osby's not satisfied with what's easy for the Western ear to hear. He likes to stretch the membrane. (reviewed on CD) —Robin Tolleson

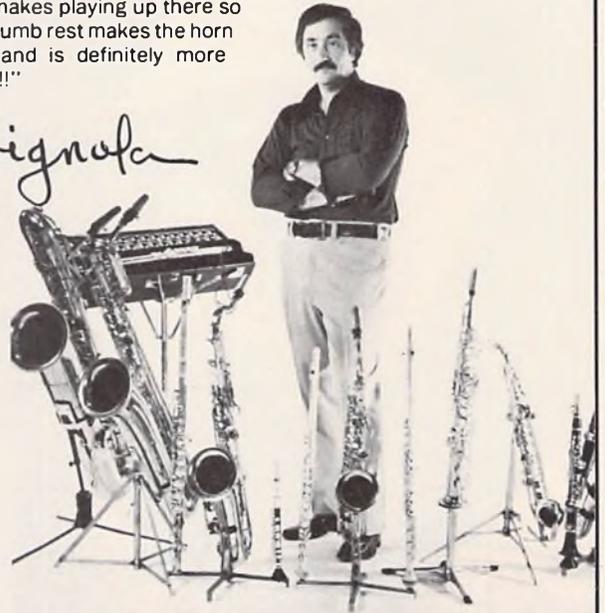
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1 JONATHAN "JO" JONES. "I Want To Be Happy"

(from *THE MAIN MAN*, Pablo) Jones, brushes on drums; Roy Eldridge, Harry Edison, trumpets; Vic Dickenson, trombone; Eddie Davis, tenor sax; Sam Jones, bass; Freddie Green, guitar; Tommy Flanagan, piano. Recorded 1976.

Is that one of my favorite players playing brushes? [*hums along with Jones' break*] That's Jonathan, right? What year was this made? I knew from the start, but I wanted to listen to it all the way through. I laid one brush on his heart at the funeral—I got permission to do that. He was my idol. When the Basie band would come to Boston in the early '40s, I had no school that week. People have said I looked like him; Dorothy Donegan told me recently, "You look more like Jonathan every day."

His touch and some of the licks he played—as he would say, he invented the high-hat. And the way he played a cymbal! He was the first drummer I heard intentionally turn the beat around—others may have done it earlier, but he was the first I heard. Jo Jones gets 5 stars, anyhow.

2 PANAMA FRANCIS AND THE SAVOY SULTANS. "Clap Hands, Here Comes Charlie"

(from *PANAMA FRANCIS AND THE SAVOY SULTANS*, Classic Jazz) Francis, drums, leader, arranger; Francis Williams, Irv Stokes, trumpets; Norris Turney, Howard Johnson, George Kelly, reeds; Red Richards, piano; John Smith, guitar; Bill Pemberton, bass.

The new Savoy Sultans? Panama Francis—his solo is just an edge faster than the band's tempo, which is normal. He knows, he played with Lucky Millinder, Cab Calloway, too, I think; he was one of the big band drummers of the '40s.

"Clap Hands, Here Comes Charlie"—Basie used to feature Jo doing that. You didn't think I'd get Panama Francis? I respect everybody. 3 stars.

3 BEN WEBSTER. "Spang"

(from *THE BIG THREE*, Doctor Jazz) Sid Catlett, drums; Ben Webster, tenor sax; Idress Sulieman, trumpet; Tony Scott, clarinet; Argonne Thornton (Sadik Hakim), piano; Bill DeArango, guitar; John Simmons, bass.

Ben Websterish; that's not Tony Scott, is it? The feeling on the drums is Sid Catlett's. I knew him—drove him home to Harlem in my first automobile. Sid was a tall, graceful, warm guy—I never saw him get angry. I



ROY HAYNES

by Howard Mandel

Drummer Roy Haynes has kept the tempo of the times for Luis Russell's Savoy Ballroom band, Lester Young, Charlie Parker, and Sarah Vaughan in her prime, John Coltrane and the earliest jazz-rock of Gary Burton, Chick Corea's standards trio, and Pat Metheny on his *Question And Answer* tour and album.

love his drumming, but I'd have preferred to hear something he did with Lester Young, trading fours.

You might say he's dropping bombs—I'd say he's making accents. It's not what he did, it's how he did it. Sticks or brushes, he had an amazing bag of tricks. Just the way he made rim shots. . . . Neither he nor Jonathan played rudimental drums, which intrigued me in itself. This isn't a 5-star record, but Sid Catlett was one of the greatest drummers there ever was; 5 stars for Sid.

4 ED BLACKWELL, DON CHERRY. "Mutron," "Bemsha Swing"

(from *EL CORAZON*, ECM) Blackwell, drums; Cherry, organ, pocket trumpet.

Sounds a little avant-gardish, like the guys who played with Ornette Coleman—Cherry and Blackwell. Yeah? Hey, I'm great at this. I could feel something from that, could tell even if Blackwell's not playing cymbal, even before Don played the horn. I like how they

Venturing from his home in Freeport, Long Island to pick up a Grammy, lead a quintet at Condon's, or pay paternal attention to his trumpeter/son Graham's career, Haynes is a lively presence and much in demand for his abilities to spark soloists and unite ensembles. He's had previous blindfold tests, and was given no information about the music played—but he needs a new needle and cartridge, if not a turntable. Hearing one channel of stereo, he still knew players young and old almost immediately.

played with Ornette; I like Billy Higgins, too. It's a different approach—not a style, not a sound, but an approach to the instrument, the way it was hit, the feeling from the drums. Blackwell has that New Orleans concept, *plus*. 5 stars for that—and 5 for me knowing them.

5 MARVIN "SMITTY" SMITH. "Just Have Fun"

(from *KEEPER OF THE DRUMS*, Concord) Smith, drums, composer; Ralph Moore, tenor sax; Wallace Roney, trumpet; Robin Eubanks, trombone; Steve Coleman, alto sax; Lonnie Plaxico, bass; Mulgrew Miller, piano.

Ralph Moore—I find him for my band, and all of a sudden he's the hottest tenor player around. Smitty. I got that 'cause I'm listening—the critics don't know the depth of Roy Haynes! Smitty's playing, it's there on the record—yeah! He knows it, and he grows all the time; he's a good musician. Nice hands. Cool. 5 stars. **DB**