

Joey DeFrancesco & Jack McDuff • Carmen McRae

DOWN BEAT

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Jazz, Blues & Beyond

Ellington

Reflections on Duke's
amazing legacy

By Wynton Marsalis



FUTURE STARS... ★ 14th Annual Student Music Awards



Duke Ellington



Jack McDuff



Joey DeFrancesco



Carmen McRae

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By Wynton Marsalis



WILLIAM P. GOTTLIEB

editor's note: Wynton Marsalis' reflections on Duke Ellington were adapted from a speech given at the recent International Association of Jazz Educators conference held in Washington, D.C.

Ellington

Sweets

For me, reflecting on Duke Ellington is a very curious thing. I never listened to his music growing up. I only heard about him through my father, who would say, "Yeah, Duke, I remember seeing Duke at the Playboy Club. A two-week gig and half the cats in the band wouldn't show up on time. But Duke was calm through all of that." Duke Ellington was a man with half a band, in my mind.

I didn't fall in love to any of his music. To be truthful, I didn't really like it. It sounded like the type of music that old people dance to in ballrooms, thinking they were doing something hip. To me, hip was Earth, Wind and Fire, Funkadelic, and Confunction.

When I moved to New York City, a good friend, music critic and author Stanley Crouch, and I would get together every day and have long discussions on music. He would always leave me some Duke Ellington records, but I would never check them out. I thought, "Duke, isn't that big band jazz? I don't like that." It reminded me of high school competitions where all the big bands sounded like marching bands with rhythm sections. To me, big bands limited the individuality of the soloist, which, in turn, limited the expression of jazz.

One night, Stanley and I went to music critic and author Al Murray's house. We were talking about Charlie Parker and John Coltrane. Al said, "You can't compare someone who had control over one line to someone who had control over 17." It made sense to me. That's when I started listening to Duke Ellington. I'd play one record after another, Duke's Smithsonian records in particular. There was something great on every one. Then there were the CBS records from the '50s and the RCA albums from the '20s and '30s. Through them, I developed a personal relationship with Duke Ellington. It wasn't the type of relationship you have with someone you're compatible with, or where they make you feel good by telling you what you feel like hearing. It was the type of relationship that's developed by anyone who listens to a great artist.

Listening to Duke Ellington reminded me of the time I heard Beethoven's Fifth Symphony in a Civic Orchestra rehearsal at the age of 12 or 13. At first, I was totally prejudiced against the music, then, one day I said to myself, "I kind of like this." I started identifying different things that would make me feel a certain way about living in the world. I started to realize that Beethoven was dealing with something. The same thing happened with Duke. I

could see a broad vision of what our country was about, a broad vision of what we should be dealing with. I saw with greater clarity what romance really should sound like in music.

These are some of the aspects that attracted me to Duke Ellington. But there are others, too. First of all, he was always clean on the bandstand. He had these hip, artistic fashion combinations—all kinds of different colors. So, when you saw Duke, you knew you were checking out somebody of elegance and refinement. Also, he always worked hard to get a clear, recorded sound; even on the early records, you can hear the bass.

Then, there are the little things. Duke loved ice cream. Someone who loves ice cream can't be that bad—because ice cream does something to soften you up. In addition, he was too dignified to make a public spectacle of his private and personal relations. His personal relations were far-reaching and intricate. And what penmanship! I had a chance to go to the Smithsonian when I was in Washington recently. Curator Marquette Foley was nice enough to pull out some of the manuscripts. I looked at sheet after sheet of Duke's music and could tell it was music that he was just working on at his piano, because it had people's phone numbers and random notes on them; but the penmanship was so meticulous and clean and neat. Anybody who's that meticulous, even in work, you have to love.

Duke also had a quick wit. You can hear it in his music. There's a story about Duke, where, after playing a concert, he came off the stage. He walked over to two attractive ladies and stated, "My, you make those dresses look so lovely. We didn't know there were goddesses in the house." One of the women said, "Oh, but Duke, this is just the makeup and things that I have on. You should see me in the morning." And Duke replied, "Ah, but what could one do to be so fortunate?" He was always thinking on his feet.

Back to the music: Duke believed in doing things in one take. When you're in the studio, you can spend two hours on one song. When you listen to the tapes later, each take gets sadder and sadder. Musicians always think, "I'm going to get it on the next one." And you never do.

Duke also advanced the conception of democratic creation. He was the inventor of the real American orchestra. For him, the achievement wasn't to write out all of the parts. The achievement was how to get all of these individually-developed parts to work together, incorporating everyone and their conception into a

singular, grand conception. There's a great art to being able to coordinate all of these musical minds. Put a group of musicians together and everybody has a different opinion on how a tune should go. Duke had to be a great organizer to coordinate all of that and come up with such cohesive music.

Another attraction is his love and understanding of New Orleans; not just the music, but New Orleans, in general. Take one of his songs in the *New Orleans Suite*, "Thank God For The Beautiful Land On The Delta." You hear his tremendous range of rhythmic moods—from the stankiest, most boogie-oriented grooves to refined lilting lopes. This is a great achievement.

His perseverance has made me realize that inclusion, not alienation, is central to jazz music.

Duke distilled the sophistication of New Orleans music. I'm from New Orleans, but it was through Duke Ellington that I learned about my city's actual impact on the history of jazz. Listening to Duke Ellington's music, you hear the sophistication of that style: the clarinet playing this high, cute part; the trumpets playing with the snare drums; and the trombones down there sliding around, playing something noble. It's the appropriation of the blues, the sensuality and romance of the music

captured, the soulful sound of alto saxophonist Johnny Hodges. There's that real deep, soulful bass mixing with the sound of the drums and Duke on the piano comping like a whole band by himself. Then, the whole thing weaves all these moods and shifts in the course of one song.

One of the most difficult things to do in writing for the jazz band is to come up with something creative for the bass and the drums. Piano players are always out on their own thinking of something hip. But in Duke Ellington's music, there are also thousands of grooves, thousands of new and different ways for the drums and bass to play. Examples can be found on "Afro-Bossa," "Afro-Eurasian Eclipse," "Caravan," "Moon Over Cuba."

He played successfully with everyone from Sidney Bechet to Dizzy Gillespie to John Coltrane. That's a tremendous accomplishment. Duke didn't get stifled by prejudices or ignorances. He was always ready to embrace different forms of music, other ways of playing, things that he felt could work inside of his conception.

Everybody is talking about world music and the influence of different musics from around the world. Duke brought the United States to the world and brought the world to jazz with records like

A School of Duke

The Duke Ellington School for the Performing and Visual Arts, formerly Western High School, is a century-old Georgetown landmark offering programs in theater, vocal and instrumental music, the visual and media arts. Washington, D.C.'s Board of Education authorized the founding of an arts high school in 1976, 18 months following Ellington's passing. Appropriately, the new school was honored with the name of the city's most artistic native son.

The Ellington School accepts approximately 400 children from all over Washington, although non-District residents must pay tuition. Entrance requirements include an audition and a "C" grade point average, but Principal Marty Davis admits that exceptions are frequently made.

"What we get is basically raw talent that many times must be whipped into shape," he said. "We like to say that if the child has talent, let that speak at least for the first school year, and focus on letting the child get the other piece. We recognize that children have not performed at their best capacity in junior high, but there are children like that here now who have just blossomed. So we have to gamble on children here, which sometimes may upset people."

There's much evidence that the gamble has been worth taking. Impressive student and teacher artwork lines the school's lobby and corridors. The school underwent a major overhaul in the early '80s and now boasts a fine, state-of-the-art, 800-seat theater as its showpiece. It appears to have a favorable standing in the philanthropic community and students stay active contributing their talents to a variety of arts activities. But the program that has repeatedly proven a solid prestige-builder and fundraiser has been its jazz-studies component. Led by Davey Yarborough, the jazz-studies program began in 1986. Before that, jazz was available only as an extracurricular after-school activity, with New York bassist Mickey Bass coming down weekly to teach it. Yarborough assisted Bass after he graduated from Ellington until funding cuts strained the activity's already lean budget. He returned in 1984 to become program director.

"My job starts at 11 a.m. and ends at five, but I come in at 7:55 a.m.," Yarborough said. "I'm worried more about their progress as a unit—that they're on top of their game—because that's the only way they'll raise the eyebrows of a Billy Taylor or Wynton Marsalis. Their educational careers are in my hands and I feel strongly about what's going on."

Yarborough helps turn youthful potential into high-caliber musicianship with energy and expertise, and by tirelessly seeking out professional equipment, funding support, regular outside instruction and influence from jazz notables (including Dizzy Gillespie, Max Roach, and several Columbia-label artists spearheaded by Wynton's strong interest in maintaining the program), and by the quality of performance from his charges earning them deserved recognition.

David Marsh, a 29-year-old bassist and George Washington University jazz studies instructor, and 19-year-old Syracuse University sophomore Allison Crockett attest to the impact of their Ellington experiences. Both express a profound loyalty and affection for the school.

"It was wonderful to be around such a nurturing environment," said Marsh. "The music program was intensive, but Ellington prepared me for a career. We had great instructors who talked straight to us and counted on us to do well when called on. Now I'm holding my own as a player and teacher with degreed people, but I learned and grew in a situation where everybody knew each other's capabilities and we helped each other grow. As a result, I was able to bypass college."

Aspiring jazz singer Crockett, who looks upon vocal teacher Edward Jackson and Yarborough as respective "father" and "uncle" figures, respectively, credits Jackson with thorough professional preparation in classical and jazz approaches. Yarborough built confidence, pushing her towards simultaneous playing and singing, a skill now yielding more opportunities for Crockett to showcase her talents.

"I studied piano before I enrolled, but Ellington's music program helped me better deal with practice time," she related. "It also strengthened my discipline and sense of responsibility in ways that went beyond music. I left there with a desire to teach and share the knowledge they've given. There's a type of love at Ellington that you can't get even from family members. It had a very positive effect on me." —Wayne K. Self

Afro-Bossa, Afro-Eurasian Eclipse, and The Far East Suite. He was doing that in the '50s and '60s.

He always pursued beauty and wrote music with a purpose, never sinking to fads, be they commercial or artistic. He remained true to his musical vision, regardless of the country's changing moods. You have to remember, Duke Ellington lived during tragic times in our country's racial history. But he always dealt with prejudice and the woes that it brings with dignity, always pursuing something beautiful, trying to make the world better for all of us. Duke addressed the mythology of our country no matter how far we strayed from the realities of that mythology. His perseverance has made me realize that inclusion, not alienation, is central to jazz music. Somehow, the idea was developed that jazz musicians don't come from the people, are not part of the people. Or that musicians are somehow above the people. This is not a conception of jazz, but it is a conception that's been used to destroy orchestral music's relation to the public. Duke and Louis Armstrong as well as any number of other early jazz musicians had a more inclusionary perspective. They were always ready to accept new ideas. They were friendlier and had stronger beliefs in community. If you read Duke's autobiography, *Music Is My Mistress* [Da Capo, \$13.95], you have to wonder, how could this man remember all of these people, let alone pertinent facts about their lives. So, he was a

ELLINGTON COLLECTION/NAT. SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION



The Duke Ellington Orchestra appearing on the Maurice Chevalier Show in New York, circa 1931

great humanist. Duke would have some of the most hip, most elaborate compliments. And that's how his music is. It's like something Albert Murray says all the time: "Man don't get caught out there protestin'. Educate." And that is what Duke Ellington was doing. He wasn't protesting, he was educating.

He recognized the possibilities for development in the New Orleans conceptions of polyphony, call and response, riffs, breaks, grooves, and attitudes. This, in itself, is a great achievement, because New Orleans music during Duke's youth was still a novelty. His whole attitude toward music changed because he was already playing this sweet music and knew about its sensual, romantic aspects. When he heard that New Orleans music, Duke didn't just hear an eccentric sound, he heard all the fundamental elements of the music and realized that it could form the basis of his art. He proceeded to systematically go through all of these things and train himself to write and use these elements in creating his work. No schools existed to teach him that.

Duke created a new system of harmony using the chromatic and semi-tone proposition of the blues and the triadic juxtaposition of gospel music. He was instrumental in timbre and literally reorganized the American orchestra. The personality of the sound of each member of the orchestra took importance over the organization.

Duke was the constant inventor of new forms, many that have never been addressed, such as the creation of sonnets on *Such Sweet Thunder*. His extended works, such as *The Tattooed Bride* and *Harlem*, have never been imitated. And if they were imitated, the music was so poor that it didn't resemble Duke's works at all.

Then there are his concertos, serving as portraits of well-known people. He wrote the "Concerto For Cootie" for trumpeter Cootie Williams and "Boy Meets Horn" for cornetist Rex Stewart. Each captures a certain aspect of the personality of the musician it's written for. "Concerto For Cootie" is derived from a phrase that Cootie always played. "Boy Meets Horn" uses all the little trick figures and humorous riffs Rex Stewart played. Duke Ellington

is responsible for the consolidation of a range of compositional techniques for Tin Pan Alley songs, vocal accompaniments, solos for pianos, violin, drum, bass, trumpet, saxophone, every instrument, words and music, plays and stage musicals such as *Jump For Joy, Beggar's Holiday, and My People*, ballets such as *The River*, music to paintings, TV music, and film scores such as *Anatomy Of A Murder* and *Paris Blues*. He's the composer of hundreds of superior blues tunes of all shapes and sizes. He created a body of varied music describing human interaction that is unmatched by any composer in the history of music. Duke wrote hundreds of



Duke gives the "Okay" at a recording session with guitarist Freddie Guy looking on, circa 1945

METROPOLITAN PHOTO SERVICE

superior melodies which can be played without an arrangement and still retain their purity and beauty. Also, the arrangements can be played without the melody and they sound like melodies.

On top of that, Duke developed totally original American versions of several European classics, the most famous being *The Nutcracker Suite*. He realized new arenas for articulation of varied musical personalities, and for each instrument at any tempo. That's one thing about Duke's music—it's all at different tempos. But all of his music is geared to the articulation of personality and sound.

Duke Ellington's achievements are singular. His music is American music representing the principles of democracy. Without focusing on that, it's difficult to understand what he's doing. That's the challenge of coming to grips with who he is. We haven't seen anything even closely resembling the Duke Ellington Orchestra since his death. Perhaps, we never will. **DB**

DUKE ELLINGTON SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

from the '20s

THE OKEH ELLINGTON - Columbia C2K 46177

EARLY ELLINGTON - RCA/Bluebird 6852

THE BRUNSWICK ERA, VOL. 1 - MCA 42325

from the '30s

BACK ROOM ROMP - Portrait Masters 44094

BRAGGIN' IN BRASS - 2-Portrait Masters 44395

from the '40s

THE BLANTON/WEBSTER BAND - RCA/Bluebird 5659

THE GREAT ELLINGTON UNITS - RCA/Bluebird 6751

CARNEGIE HALL CONCERTS: JANUARY 1943 - Prestige 2PCD-34004-2

AT FARGO - VJC 1019/20

SOLOS, DUETS & TRIOS - RCA/Bluebird 2178

from the '50s

ELLINGTON UPTOWN - Columbia CK 40836

BACK TO BACK - Verve 821 578 (w/ Johnny Hodges)

AT NEWPORT - Columbia CK 40587

ALL STAR ROAD BAND - 2-Signature 40012

SUCH SWEET THUNDER - CSP JCL 1033

from the '60s & '70s

AFRO-BOSSA - Discovery 871

MONEY JUNGLE - Blue Note 85129 (w/ Max Roach & Charles Mingus)

THE FAR EAST SUITE - RCA/Bluebird 7640

MEETS COLEMAN HAWKINS - MCA/Impulse MCAD 5650

THE ELLINGTON SUITES - OJC 446

THIS ONE'S FOR BLANTON - Pablo 2310-721 (w/ Ray Brown)

& JOHN COLTRANE - MCA/Impulse MCAD 39103

NEW ORLEANS SUITE - Atlantic 1580

Organ Groovin' With Joey D & Brother Jack



By Tom Surowicz

Brother Jack McDuff has been headlining jazz clubs for roughly 40 years. A salty, dapper black man, age 64, self-taught, McDuff's one of the living legends of groove-organ music. He's a contemporary and competitor of Jimmy Smith, Jimmy McGriff, and the rest of the first wave of Hammond B-3 heroes. McDuff's made 61 albums as a leader, and scads more as a sideman with at least one jukebox hit single—the memorable, oft-reissued “Rock Candy”—and a reputation as one of the better talent scouts, particularly when it comes to hiring young, unknown guitarists. George Benson, Pat Martino, John Hart, and Mark Whitfield are all graduates of McDuff-led combos. Today, McDuff resides quietly in the heart of the Midwestern snow belt—Minneapolis.



Joey DeFrancesco, the new hero of the organ, is a fresh-faced wiz kid of 19. He's white, classically trained on piano, and signed to mega-powerful CBS Records/Sony Music. DeFrancesco's complete discography is just a half-dozen albums, including a trio of hit CDs—*All Of Me*, *Where Were You?*, and *Part III*. Still, he's well-known to modern jazz audiences and radio programmers, who've embraced this maverick member of the generation raised on synthesizers, programmed beats, and other artificial sounds. DeFrancesco varies his timbral palette by doubling on trumpet, an instrument bequeathed to him by his ex-boss, Miles Davis. Since that time, Joey's fast become a hot ticket at the nation's clubs and concert halls. When not on the road, DeFrancesco camps out in warm, dry, Scottsdale, Arizona.

On the surface, you couldn't find two guys in the same business with more contrasts than senior citizen McDuff and Sun Belt upstart DeFrancesco, right? But the truth of the matter is these two fellows have oodles in common, and are not just close friends, but *soul mates*. Before DeFrancesco landed in Arizona, he came from the organ-rich City of Brotherly Love—Philadelphia. His father was both a part-time professional organist and an organ combo fan, taking young Joey out to hear the reigning keyboard kings whenever they hit town. In fact, DeFrancesco and McDuff jammed together when little Joey was 10 years old, an event they both remember with great fondness. "Joey was *clean*, man—he had on this little three-piece suit, and his little feet could hardly touch the pedals," McDuff recalls, with a big smile. "But he could play some, even back then."

DB arranged to have the two meet at *The Spruce Lounge*, a pleasant hole-in-the-wall on Minneapolis' southside, on a cold day in March, but they heated it up as Tom Surowicz rolled the tape.

Joey DeFrancesco: Y'know, I've got about 50 of your albums, Jack.

Jack McDuff: You do? I might have 20 or 25.

JD: Yeah, but you did a lot more than *that*.

JM: That's right. I made 61 altogether.

JD: Well, I've got about 50 of 'em. Remember the one with strings on it?

JM: Strings? (*Clearly, McDuff doesn't remember.*)

JD: Yeah, the one with the whole orchestra, where you did "If Ever I Would Leave You"? Man, that's pretty. I've got a tape of it here in my bag. That was one hell of a group you had back in the '60s, the Heat'n' System with George Benson.

JM: Well, we're all gonna be back together for a reunion album and tour. I don't know if George is gonna be able to make it or not.

JD: Have you heard the new cat I got on guitar in my band—Paul Bollenback? He's a monster. You'd love him, Jack. He's on the new album, *Part III*.

JM: I heard him. But ya know Joey, I'm still stuck on your first record, with that "Blues For J" thing. I got hung up on that—it's so good. (*McDuff starts humming the head of "Blues For J."*)

JD: That's Jimmy Smith's tune.

JM: I know. I played it before. But goddamn, when you do it, the tempo never *moves*. See, now that takes a little technique.

JD: Yeah, that's one thing I've really got down—my coordination. The bass line stays there all the time, no matter what I'm playin', and no matter how fast.

(*DeFrancesco later demonstrates his remarkable, two-handed*



prowess on the beat-up organ in McDuff's music room, playing bebop at a blistering tempo, while walking the bass.)

JM: Joey, do you believe in the hereafter? If I'm gonna be here after I'm gone, and I'm comin' back, you can show me that, what you just did. (*laughter*) Because there ain't no way in hell I'm gonna play it in this present world.

Tom Surowicz: *Joey, groove-organ playing's always been a strictly inner-city, black-music phenomenon. And it's associated principally with the '50s and '60s. Yet, here you are, a young, white kid, doing quite well playing organ, reaching new audiences that probably find the whole thing a little exotic. How come you decided to take such a peculiar musical path?*

JD: Probably because my dad played organ, and an organ was in the house. He had all the records around, too—like Jack's records, and Jimmy Smith's, and Groove Holmes'. Plus a lot of other stuff—Miles' records, and Coltrane, all the different influences. I just wanted to play the organ.

JM: I'm thinkin' you've come along and done a big favor for the organ, Joey, because I remember playin' Appleton, Wisconsin, when I first started out, and the guy was sittin' in the bar sayin', "Whatcha gonna do, have a funeral in here?" That was all he could think of when we brought in the organ. Organ was listed as an r&b instrument first, then it was listed in the miscellaneous category. Finally, it got its own category (in **DB's** polls).

JD: Which Jimmy Smith's been winning every year since. (*Both men laugh.*) My style's different from Jimmy's, though, and a lot of other cats. I listen to a lot of horns. The things I play are often inspired by horn lines. But I still have the *feel*. You have to have that blues feel.

JM: And that bass line has got to come natural to ya.

JD: That's right, too. Man, Groove Holmes really walked some bass lines.

JM: But you know what Groove told me that most people don't know? Groove is left-handed. He said, "Hell, I'm left-handed. But I'll never tell 'em." (*laughter*)

JD: He did tell me, though. I knew that. But of all the organ players, my favorite bass lines were always yours, Jack. You played stand-up bass with Johnny Griffin, right?

JM: Yeah, and I had the worst bass in the world—a big old blonde Kay. I had an offer to go with Art Blakey playin' bass, too.

JD: I know that. I know all about you, Jack. When you play the organ, your bass line's more staccato—*boom, boom, boom, boom*. It sounds like an upright bass.

JM: Yeah, I like that thump.

(*Later, McDuff sits down at the organ to demonstrate. Soon, DeFrancesco joins in and a swingin' private concert's underway.*)

JM: Joey, ya know I was lookin' at you just now. And you moved your hand *less* when you were going along, running all them chord changes, than when I played three notes.

JD: I've always been able to run through the changes and play different stuff. (*he says, sheepishly*)

TS: *Could that have anything to do with your classical piano training?*

JM: That's it.

JD: Nah, it doesn't, though. I was playin' that way before.

JM: You studied classically, though?

JD: Yeah, for five years. But I'm tellin' ya, that never really had an effect.



◀ Brother Jack with 10-year-old Joey at the Flight Deck in Wilmington, Delaware.



JM: I'll bet it showed you how to play the C scale *properly*.

JD: Oh, sure.

JM: Alright, I rest my case. (*he says, smiling*) But seriously, Joey, I can hear what you've got that I didn't have and probably never will. Through studying, you've got the correct fingering. When I play four notes, I gotta jump all over the place on the keyboard. That's the truth.

TS: Jack, how come you've been associated with so many great guitarists over the years?

JM: Well, because they're as essential in an organ group as a bass player is in a piano trio.

TS: There's always a market for hot guitar players. But playing the organ must be a tougher career road.

JM: Organ, man, is a dead instrument.

JD: I brought it back pretty much strong.

TS: How can it be a dead instrument if you're still around, and Jimmy Smith's still out there?

JM: You named two of us.

TS: Well, there's Jimmy McGriff.

JM: That's three. That's not very big odds in all of music.

JD: It's not a dead instrument, it's just that nobody *new* was playin' it. The cats that can play that are left are Jimmy Smith, Jack McDuff, Groove Holmes, McGriff, Charlie Earland. . . .

TS: Do you think if you're successful enough, especially on a big label like Columbia, that there'll be a crop of new organ players?

JD: Yeah, it's already happenin'.

JM: And they'll start sellin' some organs.

JD: And the cats that used to play in years past will do better, too.

JM: They aren't gonna be talkin' about synthesizers. They gonna be talkin' about *organs*.

JD: You know what, Jack? I play this thing every year called the NAMM convention. They have all the new equipment there. And I went there this year and all the companies are makin' organs now. They're makin' synthesizers, because there's still that market. But the organ's gettin' real strong now. Hammond's making a new model called the XB-3, which is gonna be the new B-3. But they only weigh about 100 pounds, man. And there's a company that I do some work for called Voce, and they're building me a double manual controller, with 25 bass pedals. Two keyboards, 25 bass pedals, and a rack that hooks up to it where the sound comes from. The keyboard itself weighs about 25 pounds. And all together it weighs about 50 pounds. You can put it right on an airplane. And you can play a chord and it roars like a B-3—it's got that sound! Nothin' swings like an organ, man. I love upright bass and piano, but if an organ groove is right, there's nothin' like it. Organ is one of the most coordinated instruments.

JM: And *physical*. There's so much depth and bottom you can almost feel the floor vibrating.

JD: Yeah. Don't get me wrong, I love pianos. You got my new album, Jack, and I play some piano on there.

JM: Have they got ya to sing yet, Joey?

JD: Not yet, they haven't. (*laughter*)

JM: Can you sing?

JD: A little bit.

JM: Well, you see that's your next big move. Then, first thing you know, you ain't playin' nothin'—just little bitty breaks, mini-solos—if they find out you can sing. (*he smiles*)

TS: Let's hope that's far off in the future. The world needs organ players more than singers.

JM: That's right. Remember, there was a time when if you didn't have an organ in your band, you didn't get a gig. The man would say, "Who's playin' organ wit' ya?" If you'd say, "I don't have an organ," then he'd say, "Give me your number. I'll call ya." (*laughter*) Then there was that drought that had no organs—for awhile, you heard no organ records. But now since Joey, it's comin' back. And that can't do nothin' but help the organ. 'Cause before, the white folks didn't have no sponsors. You know, I remember how we used to go and root for Jackie Robinson at the ballpark. Well, he wasn't but one man on the team. He couldn't win the games by himself. But now, the white folks got somebody to cheer. That can't do nothin' but help out all the veterans, too. The old audience had just about given up listening to the organ, maybe 'cause they'd already heard everything us cats had to play.

JD: You know what happens is, a lot of the young musicians and the white people—or *any* people that never knew about the organ—now they hear me and they say, "Hey, here's a young cat and he can sure *play*. I wonder where he got that stuff from." And then, they go back and find out about Jack, and about Jimmy Smith, and Groove Holmes, and the rest of the cats. They find out that this stuff's been goin' on for a long, long time.

TS: So, what's the next logical stop in the organ's evolution?

JD: Man, me and Jack have gotta record something together—that would be the greatest!

DB

JACK McDUFF SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader

THE REENTRY—Muse 5361
SCREAMIN'—Prestige 7259
THE CONCERT McDUFF—Prestige 7362
LIVE AT THE FRONT ROOM—Prestige 7274
GREATEST HITS—Prestige 7481
ROCK CANDY—2-Prestige 24013

as a sideman

GRANTSTAND—Blue Note 84086 (w/Grant Green)
NOTHIN' BUT THE BLUES—Delos 13491-4001 (Grammy winner w/Joe Williams)
THE LATE SHOW—Fantasy 9655 (Grammy winner w/Etta James & Cleanhead Vinson)
FINE AND MELLOW—Concord Jazz 342 (w/Carmen McRae)

JOEY DeFRANCESCO DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader

ALL OF ME—Columbia 4446
WHERE WERE YOU?—Columbia 45443
PART III—Columbia/Sony Music 47063

as a sideman

WHY NOT?—Muse 5433 (w/Houston Person)

STRAWBERRY MOON—Columbia 40510 (w/Grover Washington, Jr.)
AMANDLA—Warner Bros. 25873 (w/Miles Davis)

JACK McDUFF'S EQUIPMENT

"I just use a plain old Hammond B-3," McDuff explains, "with a Leslie speaker, R-series. People always ask me if I've done something to soup up the bass, but there's nothin' special to it—it's just that my strong bass lines always come through. In my bands, I've always been lucky with guitarists and bassists," McDuff jokes.

JOEY DeFRANCESCO'S EQUIPMENT

DeFrancesco plays a Hammond C-3 organ with an XR-1200 powermixer running through an MTI Rotophaser, and Peavey ISOIHT for mids and lows. "I also use a Martin trumpet, with a Giardenelli mouthpiece given to me by Miles Davis," DeFrancesco notes. "As far as piano goes, I'll play whatever's there at the club. I rarely use piano in live situations, though."

CUT

Carmen McRae



By James T. Jones IV

HERB SNITZER

any more, on the road two weeks, home for three. "I'm getting tired of the airplane; they don't make me feel too well."

And she's tired of the snubs. Last year, Japan named her top jazz singer. Yet here, the Grammy academy passed over what most agree was her best work in a decade—1990's *Carmen Sings Monk*, a project years in the making (see "Reviews" Aug. '90). Instead, it chose Ella Fitzgerald's *All That Jazz*, an album that neither charted nor received much airplay.

"I considered it one of the hardest projects I've ever worked on. It was certainly different. Nobody thought about Monk and lyrics to his music for an entire album. We picked some good tunes, and some good lyrics, too. And I worked hard as hell on that album. His melodies are not easy to remember because they don't go where you think they're going to go.

"Those [Grammy] people are not interested in what I do. I love Ella Fitzgerald, but Ella's voice is not Ella's voice anymore. Give me a break. They even gave one to Betty Carter, and I know I sing better than her. Shit."

No doubt McRae will get nominated next year for *Sarah*. "If I win, I'll be very happy," she says. "But I'm not going to spend my whole feelings and emotions on it."

With Harry Connick, Jr. winning a Grammy for best male vocalist over Jon Hendricks and Tony Bennett, McRae feels the whole concept of jazz singing has been lost. "I like Harry. He's a nice kid and everything, but over Tony Bennett, no way."

She couldn't believe she was up against Dianne Reeves. "She's more rhythm & blues. That's how it sounds to me where her heart lies, unless she's making a combination which cannot be done. Jazz is a phenomenon of its own. There's no in-between; there's no on-the-side. It's straight down the middle. It's either jazz, or it isn't. They want to say Anita Baker is jazz. Wait a minute. Where do they get that from? She's a good singer, and she has a good voice, but she's definitely not a jazz singer, and I'll go to court on that one."

Exactly what is a jazz singer? "A jazz singer is just like a jazz musician. It's all about improvising. It's something in your heart, and something that is you. You know they call Rosemary Clooney a jazz singer. This woman never improvised in her life. She sings a song exactly the way it's written."

She points to Diane Schuur. "She hasn't got to where she should get yet because she's just starting, but she knows music. She plays piano. She knows the chord changes and she sings them. There's not too much feeling in her lyrics, but that's something else again; but I would call her a jazz singer.

"You should know an instrument to be a good jazz singer. If you don't, you just luck out. Look at Jon Hendricks. Ain't nobody can scat better than him, and I don't think he plays or knows an instrument, but that's one of those rare, rare occasions. But Ella plays a little piano. Sarah played piano; I play piano; Shirley Horn plays. All those ladies can sing jazz." Especially Sarah, McRae says. "In my opinion, she was the best lady improviser. That includes everybody, including myself."

McRae's Vaughan tribute evolves out of more than just musical admiration. They'd been friends since the '40s. "We're both from the East. She was Newark, and I was from New York. Then, we moved out here [to California] and we hung out a lot. She lived down the street. Then, she moved to Hidden Hills. That's a long way. I used to still visit her house and she would still visit mine, but as time went on, things changed. I'm on the road, she was on the road."

Well-heeled Washingtonians pack Anton's Club during the final night of Carmen McRae's weeklong engagement. They're a diverse bunch, parties of four and five freely ordering drinks and lamb chops, young musicians catching their first glimpse, older fans recalling McRae's early days when she sang in Chicago as Carmen Kirby.

After a 15-minute warmup set by her trio, McRae strolls onstage, tired but majestic. The qualities that have kept her a top club draw for four decades become immediately obvious: her earthy tone, her impeccable and sassy phrasing, her acute intonation and ability to manipulate a melody. She sings the word "cries" with a deliberate sob.

One of the original singers to emerge out of the bebop tradition, McRae still relishes standards: "Love Dance," "I'm An Errand Girl For Rhythm," "No More Blues," "Sweet Lorraine." "People know those tunes," McRae explains later, "so that when you improvise, they still know what the song is."

For McRae, improvisation is still her bread and butter. "You have to improvise. You have to have something of your own that has to do with that song. And you have to know where you're going when you improvise."

With several years of piano training under her fingers, McRae prides herself in knowing exactly where she's going. About mid-set, she does her usual medley where she accompanies herself on the piano. This night, in the audience was Shirley Horn, who backs McRae on her new album, *Sarah—Dedicated To You*.

With a hefty catalog of recordings to her credit, McRae still tries to challenge herself whenever she can. She collaborated with other artists on albums before it became the popular thing to do. She's recorded various tributes, including odes to idol Billie Holiday, pals Nat King Cole and Sarah, and her most challenging, Monk, who would drop by her apartment at night and play her worn-out upright Wurlitzer.

But at age 71, she's grown weary. McRae, who suffers from asthma and is thereby confined to the stool during performances, is contemplating retirement this year. She doesn't travel much

McRae covers 11 of Vaughan's best-known classics, including "Misty," "Tenderly," and "Send In The Clowns." The project also brings McRae together with longtime friend Shirley Horn and her band mates, bassist Charles Ables and drummer Steve Williams.

privilege. It's not like God said, 'Carmen, you're the only one that can say what you feel.' That's bullshit because if I'm talking about something, giving my opinion, it's my opinion. I think that's freedom of speech."

THE CRAP

McRae and Horn have been attending each other's performances for years, occasionally sitting in. Their first professional gig together was at the 1990 NorthSea Jazz Festival, with Horn backing McRae for two successful shows. That's when they decided to record together.

"Then we had to find tunes, which isn't easy," McRae says. "Everything today has to have a hook. The hook was Sarah when she died. It just happened we hadn't done anything, and that was the best thing we could have done together, because Shirley is a singer, Sarah was a singer, and I'm a singer, and we all admired each other tremendously. It was perfect."

The album finds McRae especially adventurous. "She took a lot of liberties," says Horn. "It was a lot of fun. She just sort of stepped outside. In some cases, she caught me a little unaware. I'm happy that she felt free to go ahead and do whatever she wanted to do."



HOU VIELZ

Horn refused to sing a duet with her. "I said I'd never do another duet. I did something with Joe Williams I'm not very happy about. In order to do that, you have to be well-rehearsed. Carmen wanted me to sing. I said uh-uh. She sings enough for everybody."

For McRae, Horn's piano playing was enough. "She just knocks me out. We love each other very much, as human beings. I adore her musical talents. She's just been underneath a bushel too long. She should have been out here a long time."

McRae appears to relish collaborations—Cal Tjader, George Shearing, and Betty Carter on the '87 *The Carmen McRae-Betty Carter Duets*. But their relationship soured and McRae will only say, "Betty is very hard to get along with. Let's just leave that a closed issue."

And yet, McRae has been accused of being difficult herself. Her language would shock a sailor, and her hard-as-nails reputation has kept some club owners at bay. She's been known to walk off a gig if the club owner pissed her off.

"That's a lot of bullshit. Any time you speak your mind, you're tough as nails. I've never punched anybody in the mouth. I've never pushed anybody down the stairs or shot anybody. Now, how much can you do with just words? And they have the same

Born and raised in Manhattan, McRae learned to survive in the toughest circles. "I learned in nightclubs and after-hours spots." After winning an amateur competition at the Apollo Theatre, she met Billie Holiday when she was 17. "She is my only influence."

During her early 20s, McRae married drummer Kenny Clarke, who, with Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker, were formulating bebop, thus placing her right in the midst of the jazz revolution. Between 1944 and '47, she fronted the big bands of Benny Carter, Count Basie, and Mercer Ellington.

McRae, however, traces her start to Atlantic City, where she was a chorus girl. "Some time after the show, we'd have a torch night, where I'd sit at the piano. The club owner loved my singing, and he'd bring out a bottle for the girls and they'd all sit there and cry." In the late '40s, she moved to Chicago with comedian George Kirby. "I was playing housewife, cooking and shit. He was going to pay the bills. Of course, there came a time when he didn't. And there I was, stuck." Luckily, Lulu Mason, a chorus girl from Atlantic City had also moved to Chicago. "I was having all of those problems waiting for George to send me the check to pay the rent, and she said, 'C'mon with me.' She took me someplace to play piano and sing. I said, 'Girl, I know about seven songs,' but she just thought I was great. I thought she was crazy."

"When people kept saying to me, 'Why don't you record, you have such a nice voice,' I'd say, 'Yeah, well it ain't going to happen in Chicago. I better go back to New York,' and that's what I did; and I was in New York one-and-a-half years and finally got a break to make a record."

She was voted 1955's top singer in *DB's* "new star" category, and went on to record for Blue Note, Atlantic, and smaller labels in the '70s and '80s before signing with RCA's Novus. Now she worries others aren't following suit. "It's been scary for the past four or five years. They say someone sings jazz, but I listen to them and they're not jazz."

However, she's ecstatic about the new wave of young musicians. "All these young, great cats coming up now are playing their asses off. Roy Hargrove, Mark Whitfield, Geoff Keezer. Aw man, they're here. I read that Ron Carter said they haven't paid their dues [see *DB*, Sept. '90]. I said, 'Shit, these kids are playing so good and know what they're doing. They're not guessing at the chord changes. They've been to school and learned what it's all about.' I just love these kids and I'm going to try to do as much as I can for them before I leave." **DB**

CARMEN McRAE'S EQUIPMENT

At home, McRae plays a Yamaha baby grand.

CARMEN McRAE SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

SARAH—DEDICATED TO YOU—Novus 3110-2-N

CARMEN SINGS MONK—Novus 3086-2-N

FINE AND MELLOW—Concord Jazz CJ-342

ANY OLD TIME—Denon 1216

YOU'RE LOOKIN' AT ME—Concord Jazz CJ 235

LIVE AT BUBBA'S—Who's Who In Jazz WW LP21020

I'M COMING HOME AGAIN—Versatile/Buddha B2D-6501

with Betty Carter
THE CARMEN McRAE-BETTY CARTER
DUETS—GAMH 2706

with Harry Connick, Jr.
20—Columbia FC 44369

with George Shearing
I'WO FOR THE ROAD—Concord Jazz CJ-128

with Cal Tjader
HEATWAVE—Concord Jazz CJ-189

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



RALPH PETERSON

PRESENTS THE FOTET—Blue Note 95475 2: *URBAN OMEN; THABO; HOMEGOING (FOR LEE MORGAN); AXIS MUNDI; BALLAD FOR QUEEN TIYE; MISS LADY; I CAN DREAM, CAN'T I?; CONFRONTATION; JOHNNY COME LATELY.* (60:24)

Personnel: Peterson, drums; Don Byron, clarinet, bass clarinet; Bryan Carrott, vibraphone; Melissa Slocum, bass; David Murray, tenor sax, bass clarinet (cuts 2, 6, 8); Frank Lacy, trombone, flugelhorn (2, 6, 8).

★★★★ ½

Punch it—as in “in yo’ face.” That’s Ralph Peterson’s four-limb drum aesthetic, or so it seems. Up close or through a wall, I can’t decide whether this guy is a displaced rock & roller or a Johnny Come Lately big band drummer. Each number—even on such “delicate” affairs as “Homegoing”—serves more as a launching pad for Peterson’s rhythmic adventures, à la Elvin and beyond. For drummers and percussionists, this is a 60-minute lesson on how to play with, to, around, against, and inside a variety of tunes and instruments, both composed/arranged and improvised.

Ralph’s sprawling presence is more than amply augmented by an all-new cast of characters (see p. 55 for more). Sharing composer credits on this all-but-two-originals date are vibist Carrott, clarinetist Byron, bassist Slocum, and trombonist/flugelhornist Lacy. “Soloing” through the melody on certain cuts (e.g., “Queen Tiye” and “Miss Lady”), most of the tunes give the appearance of obligatory heads, inevitably giving way to the improvisational fury of everyone aboard. Again, listen to Ralph’s blistering 7/4 attack on his “Axis Mundi”—for everyone, this piece swings with a natural rhythm all its own.

The sonics in this band are stunning, thanks in large part to Carrott and Byron. Not satisfied with simply expanding on the bebop tradition, Peterson’s ensemble “fourtet” reworks and upends what has now become traditional acoustic combo jazz. The arrangements seem almost transparent as players move in, out, and around melodies, starting and stopping, swinging, sailing, or punching one moment, resting the next. Using Byron (who said the clarinet has become irrelevant to jazz?) and Carrott as primary colorists, Peterson brings Murray and Lacy in for extra muscle on certain cuts, thus extending the group’s sonic vocabulary (and list of soloists). Without Geri Allen’s piano, there exists a lighter-than-air feel to this band, grounded only by Ralph’s seemingly unending punctuation and Murray and Byron’s bass clarinet howls (mid-’60s Blue Note dates with Bobby Hutcherson, Eric Dolphy, and Tony Williams come to mind).

Ending the set with Strayhorn’s “Johnny Come Lately” gives a real sense of closure—a comparatively sweet tune Monkishly done, with Byron and Carrott doing theme honors and Ralph alternating between sticks and brushes. This is restless music, peaceful at its core. Bang, crash . . . boom!!! (reviewed on CD)
—John Ephland



JONI MITCHELL

NIGHT RIDE HOME—Geffen GEFD-24302: *NIGHT RIDE HOME; PASSION PLAY (WHEN ALL THE SLAVES ARE FREE); CHEROKEE LOUISE; THE WINDFALL (EVERYTHING FOR NOTHING); SLOUGHING TOWARDS BETHLEHEM; COME IN FROM THE COLD; NOTHING CAN BE DONE; THE ONLY JOY IN TOWN; RAY’S DAD’S CADILLAC; TWO GREY ROOMS.* (51:45)

Personnel: Mitchell, vocals, guitars, piano, keyboards, percussion, billatron, oboe, omnichord; Larry Klein, bass, percussion, guitar, keyboards; Alex Acuña, percussion (cuts 1, 2, 5-8); Bill Dillon, pedal steel guitar (1), guitar (2, 7); Michael Landau, guitar (10); Vinnie Colaiuta, drums (3-6, 10); Wayne Shorter, soprano sax (3, 9); Karen Peris (3), David Baerwald (7), Brenda Russell (9), background vocals

★★★★ ½

Joni Mitchell has been one of folk-rock’s most courageous risktakers, experimenting with jazz (collaborating with Mingus and gigging with Jaco Pastorius and Pat Metheny in the late ’70s) and approaching lyric writing with the sensibilities of a poet and painter. However, her refusal to repeat herself musically has taken its toll. She hasn’t had an album go gold since 1977, and her superb *Dog Eat Dog* (Geffen), an engaging critique of American avarice, hypocrisy, and economic injustice that was one of three collections of new material recorded during the ’80s, didn’t even chart.

On her 15th release, *Night Ride Home* Mitchell returns to an acoustic guitar foundation while continuing to incisively probe the spiritual and social bankruptcy of our culture as well as to eloquently muse on romantic matters. She thematically bunches the 10 songs into two disparate groups. Tunes one through five are poignant sketches imbued with social criticism while the last five numbers are more autobiographical. Other highlights include the impassioned “Come In From The Cold,” a flashback to youthful days of anxious hope and sexually-charged “bonfires in my spine,” and “Ray’s Dad’s Cadillac,” a whimsically-written and soulfully-sung recollection of high school days. On the latter, Wayne Shorter contributes inspired sax musings.

The opening songs are the most compelling.

The calming litle tune is about an evening ride in the country, which serves as a momentary retreat “far from the overkill, far from the overload.” Mitchell infuses these songs with a yearning for spiritual justice and redemption, most evident in the moving “Passion Play (When All The Slaves Are Free)” and “Slouching Toward Bethlehem,” a brilliant adaptation of W.B. Yeats’s poem “The Second Coming” that chills with thunderous drumming and sparkles with gentle acoustic guitar playing. *Night Ride Home* may not ring up huge sales, but it does add up to another strong outing by one of pop’s most thoughtful and articulate artists. (reviewed on CD)
—Dan Ouellette



B.B. KING

LIVE AT SAN QUENTIN—MCA MCAD-6455: *LET THE GOOD TIMES ROLL; EVERY DAY I HAVE THE BLUES; WHOLE LOTTA LOVING; SWEET LITTLE ANGEL; NEVER MAKE A MOVE TOO SOON; INTO THE NIGHT; AIN’T NOBODY’S BUSINESS; THE THRILL IS GONE; PEACE TO THE WORLD; NOBODY LOVES ME BUT MY MOTHER; SWEET SIXTEEN; ROCK ME BABY.* (64:13)

Personnel: King, vocals, guitar; Walter King, Edgar Synigal, saxes; James Bolden, trumpet; Eugene Carrier, keyboards; Michael Doster, bass; Leon Warren, guitar; Calep Emphrey, drums.

★★★★

LIVE AT THE APOLLO—GRP GRD-9637: *WHEN LOVE COMES TO TOWN; SWEET SIXTEEN; THE THRILL IS GONE; AIN’T NOBODY’S BUSINESS; PAYING THE COST TO BE THE BOSS; ALL OVER AGAIN; NIGHTLIFE; SINCE I MET YOU BABY; GUESS WHO; PEACE TO THE WORLD.* (44:33)

Personnel: King, vocals, guitar; Gene Harris, piano, conductor; Kenny Burrell, guitar; Harold Jones, drums; Ray Brown, bass; James Morrison, Joe Mossello, Glen Drews, Harry Edison, trumpet; George Bohanon, Urbie Green, Robin Eubanks, Paul Faulies, trombone; Jeff Clayton, Jerry Dodgion, alto sax; Plas Johnson, Ralph Moore, Gary Smulyan, tenor sax.

★★ ½

Two live albums, one with his own seven-piece band, one with the 17-piece Philip Morris Super Band (a misnomer if there ever was one). B.B.’s irrepressible bluespower shines through in both contexts—gruff, gospel-intense vocals, expressive warm-toned, bent-string guitar work with signature vibrato stylings, charismatic between-songs patter. The difference here is the feel. While *San Quentin* is a loose, cooking affair that gets your blood boiling and your feet moving, *Apollo* is done in by stiff, grandiose (i.e., corny) arrangements

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(Gramavision 79454)



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—*FMOB*
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—Austin American Statesman

(Gramavision 79451)



DIDIER LOCKWOOD GROUP
Phœnix 90

French Jazz Violinist Didier Lockwood debuts his first Gramavision/JMS collection with an exciting mix of jazz, fusion and rock-influenced compositions and improvisations for a very contemporary and uplifting sound. (Gramavision/JMS 79463)



ALLAN HOLDSWORTH/GORDON BECK
With A Heart In My Song

Acclaimed guitarist Allan Holdsworth teams up with keyboardist Gordon Beck for a fascinating set of duets that falls into the realm of improvised music. From the tastefully sublime to some intensely orchestrated jamming, "With A Heart In My Song" is a thoroughly engaging collection of contemporary jazz music. (Gramavision/JMS 79464)

GRAMAVISION/JMS.

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and a drummer who couldn't shuffle to save his life. *San Quentin* is the real deal, *Apollo* is the equivalent of a guest shot on the Johnny Carson show, B.B. sitting in with a house band that is hopelessly devoid of funk.

HE DID IT HIS WAY

by Jack Sohmer

Since the impulse towards swinging rhythm, provocative chord structures, and melodic improvisation still persists among the majority of tradition-rooted jazzmen, gratitude should surely abound over the release of **Sidney Bechet: The Victor Sessions: Master Takes, 1932-43** (Bluebird 2402-2; 2 hours, 59:29; ★★★★★), a three-CD boxed set that presents all 57 titles this remarkable musician recorded for Victor between 1932 and 1941, plus the three titles he cut in 1943 for V-Disc.

Bechet's way of playing clarinet and soprano sax was the epitome of the New Orleans approach. His broad, singing vibrato, his mastery of stomps, blues, and ballads, and his limitless capacity for melodic invention set him far above anyone else of his generation. And, though as adept as any in the art of background counterpoint, it was the nature of his personality, as well as the sheer power of his projection, that found him in the forefront of any band of which he was a part.

The first of his many New Orleans Feetwarmers sessions is notable for the irresistible drive and controlled abandon of its ensembles, especially on "Sweetie Dear," "Maple Leaf Rag," and "Shag," where Bechet soars and swoops with majestic self-confidence and passion. Also included are his sideman appearances on dates led by Tommy Ladnier and Jelly Roll Morton; on the first, he is clearly the major interest, but on Morton's "High Society," he meets his match in clarinetist Albert Nicholas. Bechet's penchant for rhapsodizing on ballads is unique among New Orleans jazzmen, as is evidenced by the striking lyricism of "Indian Summer," "Georgia Cabin," and "Strange Fruit."

Like Ellington, Bechet capitalized on the individual strengths and personal timbres of his sidemen; thus, no two groups, however similar their instrumentations, sound exactly the same. For example, the Sidney de Paris/Sandy Williams frontline produces tone colors and blends as different from those of the Red Allen/J.C. Higginbotham and Henry Goodwin/Vic Dickenson brass teams as the latter two are different from each other. And this is not even to mention the two-horn/piano colloquies in which Bechet interweaves with Rex Stewart and Earl Hines or Charlie Shavers and Willie "The Lion" Smith. Supporting all of these giants on such standout tracks as "Shake It And Break It," "Ain't Misbehavin'," "Egyptian Fantasy," "I Know That You Know," "Blues In The Air," and "The Mooche" is a virtual pantheon of drumming pioneers: Baby Dodds, Zutty Singleton, Sid Catlett, J. C. Heard, and Kenny Clarke.

DB



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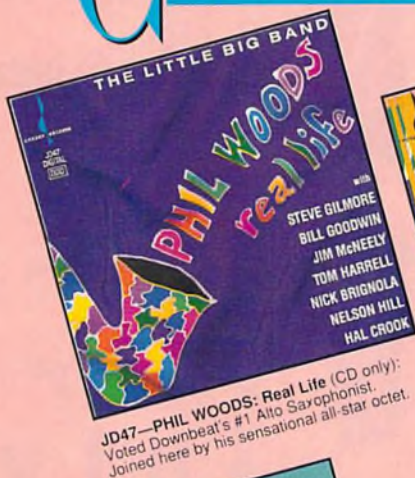
CHESKY JAZZ

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Again, it all comes down to the rhythm section. On *San Quentin*, bassist Michael Doster and drummer Calep Emphrey hook up in classic push-and-pull fashion (reminiscent of B.B.'s old Crown, Kent, and ABC rhythm sections). Doster pushes the beat while Emphrey lags behind slightly, creating a tension that propels the band. That chemistry is sadly missing on *Apollo*, where drummer Harold Jones hits relentlessly and squarely on the beat in metronomic fashion. This pedestrian approach is particularly damaging on tunes that should swing freely and groove like "Paying The Cost." And Ray Brown doesn't help matters with his squarely-on-the-beat eighth-note lines. Curiously absent from this *Live At The Apollo* recording is the presence of Ray Charles, who shared the bill with B.B. Each played a set with the Mediocre . . . uh, Super Band, then joined together for a rousing finale. That summit meeting provided the only spark in this otherwise lackluster concert.

Meanwhile, *San Quentin* is bristling with good-time energy and raggedy abandon. B.B. seems in a much looser, playful frame of mind at this outdoor concert for the inmates at San Quentin Prison. (In the staid surroundings of the Apollo, full of Philip Morris executives, media types, and other people wearing suits, he didn't let loose nearly as much.) The band comes charging out of the gate with a blazing, uptempo instrumental before settling into a B-3 shuffle version of "Let The Good Times Roll." On slow blues numbers like "Sweet Sixteen" and "Nobody Loves Me," King digs much deeper than he ever did on the *Apollo* date. And they throw down funk with nasty authority on "Rock Me Baby" and "Move Too Soon."

Also, B.B. plays much more guitar on *San Quentin*. Lucille rings out with more overdrive than usual, allowing B.B. to get more sustain on his notes and even a bit of unexpected, ferocious feedback at times. It inspires him to take more chances than he has on his last 10 records. (reviewed on CD) —Bill Milkowski



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JOHN SCOFIELD

MEANT TO BE—Blue Note 95479 2: *BIG FAN; KEEP ME IN MIND; GO BLOW; CHARIOTS; THE GUINNESS SPOT; MR. COLEMAN TO YOU; EISENHOWER; MEANT TO BE; SOME NERVE; LOST IN SPACE; FRENCH FLICS.* (69:12)

Personnel: Scofield, guitar; Joe Lovano, tenor sax, alto clarinet; Marc Johnson, bass; Bill Stewart, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

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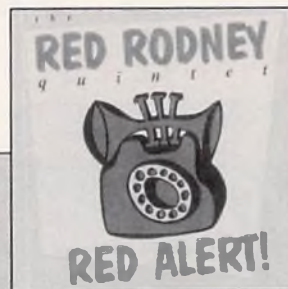
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breakthrough on his hands last year. The album *Time On My Hands* (see "Reviews" July '90) featured a new alchemy with Scofield & Co. forging a steamy and lean, keyboardless sound that owed as much to Monk and Ornette as to any post-fusion-era paradigms. The new *Meant To Be* is the generally thrilling second chapter of the new Scofield band (albeit now with Marc Johnson replacing Charlie Haden and Bill Stewart in Jack DeJohnette's chair). Like its predecessor, the album has plenty of those sloppy edges and that New Orleans-ian barbecue sauce of the previous album, as well as the fruits of musical literacy and a refreshingly free sense of time and space.

With his sawtooth articulation, stabbing note clusters, and naturalistic sense of time, Scofield reminds us that the guitar, bless it, can be a tool of raw, unquantifiable expression and brute beauty. In that respect, Lovano is a true kindred spirit, who shifts ably between incisive lines and painterly timbral shadings. Tunes are thoughtful miniatures to Scofield, a rare bird who feels while playing and thinks while writing. "Chariots" has that kind of tilting, mean Sco mofo feel and lots of good tonal grime. "Mr. Coleman To You" takes a respectful bow in the direction of Ornette C., he of collapsible calypsos and blithe melodic spirit. A loopy balladic grace rises from the title cut. "French Flics," bolstered by the hollow sonorities of Lovano's alto clarinet and a loping cadence, has the deceptively light air of a film by Francois Truffaut—say, *Shoot The Piano Player*.

Great music always carries with it a sense of underlying inevitability, and *Meant To Be* is Scofield's current operation is a model of exhilaration and exploration, and one of the best models of modern jazz without hyphens, sell-out, or nostalgic mandates. They cook with finesse, but don't forget the grease. (reviewed on CD)

—Josef Woodard



RED RODNEY

RED ALERT!—Continuum 19101: *IN CASE OF FIRE; SWEET SOUL; HOPE; ISLAND GIRL; LITTLE WILLIE LEAPS; HELENE; ONE FOR DIDI; DROPPIN' SCIENCE; VALHALLA; TIFFANY; BLUE TIMES; MOOSE THE MOOCHE.* (60:10)

Personnel: Rodney, trumpet, flugelhorn; Chris Potter, soprano, alto, tenor saxes; David Kiskoski, piano; Chip Jackson, acoustic, electric basses; Jimmy Madison, drums; Bob Belden, synthesizers, drum machine programming (cuts 2,4,6,10), piano (10); Charles "White Lightning" Telerant, vocals (12).

★ ★ ★ 1/2

DB Hall of Famer Rodney shows that at age 63 he's open to change. And yet, he stays

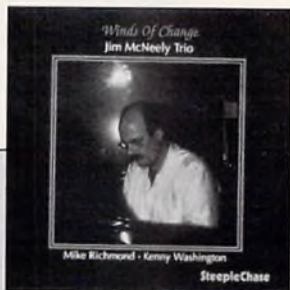
close to his roots on *Red Alert!*, a schizophrenic project that flip-flops between burning bop-flavored acoustic cuts and blatantly commercial tracks with '90s-style production values (i.e., synths and drum machines).

Unlike Freddie Hubbard, who, in giving the reins entirely over to technology on his last Blue Note album admitted that *Times Are Changing*, Rodney is only partially seduced by synths here. Cuts like "Sweet Soul," "Island Girl," "Tiffany," and "Droppin' Science" are clearly the vision of producer/arranger Bob Belden—an attempt at bringing Red up-to-date and making him competitive in the '90s marketplace. And Red goes along with the program, up to a point. Itching to blow, he breaks loose from the pop-jazz constraints and reverts back to a bop head on cookers like "In Case Of Fire," "Hope," and Miles' "Little Willie Leaps." He sounds especially strong on solos from "Blue Times," "Valhalla," and "One For Didi," in which he drops in a quote from Bird's "Confirmation."

Rodney has assembled an excellent band for this date. Bassist Chip Jackson walks hard and steady on the uptempo burners while also proving to be one of the most pyrotechnic upright soloists this side of Charnett Moffett. Pianist David Kikoski provides some fire of his own on "Hope" and "Blue Times." This album also marks the recording debut of 19-year-old saxist Chris Potter, who plays tenor in a Brecker-ish mode on "In Case Of Fire" and "Droppin' Science" and is particularly impressive on a

scorching alto solo from "Little Willie Leaps." Biggest surprise here is a techno-rap version of Bird's "Moose The Mooche" with rhymes by Charles "White Lightning" Telerant. Red's answer to Q's *Back On The Block*? Whatever, he claims Bird would've dug it. (reviewed on CD)

—Bill Milkowski



JIM McNEELY

WINDS OF CHANGE—SteepleChase 31256:
WINDS OF CHANGE; TOO TRUE TO BE GOOD; POWER GAP; YOURS AND MINE; ALL OR NOTHING AT ALL; QUIETUDE; BROODER'S WALTZ; BYE-YA. (60:06)
Personnel: McNeely, piano, synthesizer (cut 3); Mike Richmond, bass; Kenny Washington, drums.

★ ★ ★

MYRA MELFORD

JUMP—Enemy 115: *JUMP; SOME KIND OF BLUES; FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT GOES WEST TO REST; THE WORLD WEARS AWAY; SUN ON THE SOUND; ONCE AGAIN; ONLY IN CHANGE.* (48:21)
Personnel: Melford, piano; Lindsey Horner, bass; Reggie Nicholson, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

Piano trios are so prevalent, it's hard to make an individual statement. These pianists do, McNeely partly by forging an alliance between piano and bass, Melford between piano and drums.

Maybe because he's worked for imposing leaders—Mel Lewis, Stan Getz, and now Phil Woods—McNeely rarely gets his due as player or composer. He wrote most of the best stuff on *Winds Of Change*. Take the hurtling title track, where the bassline is the melody, played in unison by bass and Jim's left hand, or "Power Gap"—so called 'cause Jim plays synth on the heads and piano in the middle—where his deep, muted DX7 line merges with Richmond once again. The bassist gets a generous amount of solo space throughout; his dark tone, percussive attack, and voicelike attention to dynamics explain why. Which is not to underestimate Kenny Washington, who opens Monk's bouncy "Bye-Ya" playing the melody on traps. The out-and-out ballads (Jim's "Too True," Thad Jones' "Yours") show off McNeely's unsentimental lyricism and author-

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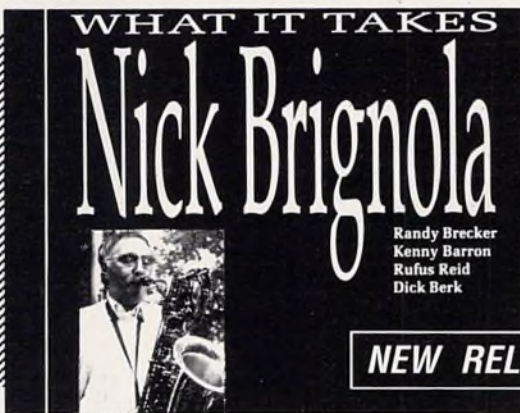
DIGITAL

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itative touch—he gives you the impression each digit is a miniature piledriver. But the real standouts are those bass-heavy bumps, weighty but light on their feet.

Melford's background is very different (see "Riffs" Oct. '90). Her classical and blues studies filter through—she introduces two tracks with covert baroque echoes, and the barrelhouse informs much of her work (like "Some Kind," a rolling-ivories blues in spirit rather than form). Some pianists who draw on disparate influences sound scattered; in Melford's case, they draw the listener in. Her tunes have real rhythmic snap—like the fast 2/4 "Jump," which she keeps jumping back to a one-bar rhythmic hook (and where, as elsewhere, Nicholson phrases in lockstep with the leader; drum parts are built in, not tacked on). Melford solos like a composer; her statements are compact and forceful—almost Pullen/drum-like at times—and have a clear structural flow. Not everything works: "Change"'s whole-oat first movement is almost new-age bland, and her take on Horner's ballad, "World," lacks crispness—but I like the way Lindsey's arco solos throughout contrast with Myra's and Reggie's percussives. Since forming this trio last year, Melford's growth as a pianist has been most impressive. *Jump* marks her as one to watch. (reviewed on CD)
—Kevin Whitehead



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ELVIS COSTELLO

MIGHTY LIKE A ROSE—Warner Bros. 26575: *THE OTHER SIDE OF SUMMER*; *HURRY DOWN DOOMSDAY (THE BUGS ARE TAKING OVER)*; *HOW TO BE DUMB*; *ALL GROWN UP*; *INVASION HIT PARADE*; *HARPIES BIZARRE*; *AFTER THE FALL*; *GEORGIE AND HER RIVAL*; *SO LIKE CANDY*; *INTERLUDE: COULDN'T CALL IT UNEXPECTED NO. 2*; *PLAYBOY TO A MAN*; *SWEET PEAR*; *BROKEN*; *COULDN'T CALL IT UNEXPECTED NO. 4*.

Personnel: Costello, vocals, guitar, keyboards; James Burton, Marc Ribot, guitar; Nick Lowe, T-Bone Walk, bass; Larry Knechtel, Benmont Tench, Mitchell Froom, keyboards; Dirty Dozen Brass Band, horns; Steve Sales, vocals; Ross McManus, trumpet.

★ ★ ★ ½

Mighty Like A Rose may not be Elvis Costello's best album to date, but it undoubtedly contains some of the finest individual songs he's recorded. "So Like Candy," co-written by Costello and Paul McCartney, is a torch with obvious parallels to the Lennon/McCartney days of old. Just as John Lennon played satiric foil to McCartney's sugar-sweet pop hooks, Costello fills in admirably. Slow, taunting, and powerful, Costello carefully walks this Beatlesque ballad between a jilted lover's fond



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BOB SHEPPARD

Tell Tale Signs

Produced by Walter Becker



Bob Sheppard's playing credits include Freddie Hubbard, Rickie Lee Jones, Michael Franks, Akiyoshi/Tabackin Band and numerous others. His debut album, *Tell Tale Signs*, is all the evidence needed to solidify this fiery saxophone artist's reputation as one of the most inventive players in jazz today. Produced by Steely Dan co-founder Walter Becker and featuring Peter Erskine, Billy Childs, John Beasley, and Tom Brechtlein.



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memories and anger. It's the type of song I'd love to hear Sinatra or one of a half-dozen other masters try. Other collaborations also provide a number of memorable moments. Along with "So Like Candy," McCartney/Costello created a great romp called "Playboy To A Man." Costello and Jim Keltner co-wrote the wildly odd "Hurry Down Doomsday (The Bugs Are Taking Over)." And, Costello's wife, Cait O'Riordan, added a haunting tune called "Broken."

As for musicians, it's an all-star cast. On "Sweet Pear," guitarist Marc Ribot drops a simple, explosive guitar solo in front of the majestic section work of the Dirty Dozen Brass Band. And, Costello even gets his father—Ross McManus, a jazz trumpeter—into the act on "Invasion Hit Parade."

For me, a few of the tunes don't quite measure up, such as the opener, "The Other Side Of Summer" and "Georgie And Her Rival." But even these are never boring, just slightly failed experiments. In total, this is complex, well-crafted pop music. And, at his best, Costello is a sponge who surrounds himself with inspiring musicians, soaks up their knowledge and style, then squeezes out material that is uniquely his own. (reviewed on cassette)

—*Frank Alkyer*



ROBERT WARD

FEAR NO EVIL—Black Top 1063: *YOUR LOVE IS AMAZING; BORN TO ENTERTAIN; FORGIVE ME DARLING; YOUR LOVE IS REAL; SOMETHING FOR NOTHING; FEAR NO EVIL; TRYING MY BEST (NOT TO NEVER DO WRONG); STRICTLY RESERVED FOR YOU; SO TIRED OF WANDERING; BLESSINGS; NEWBORN MUSIC; K-PO-KEE; LORD HAVE MERCY ON ME; DRY SPELL.* (49:26)

Personnel: Ward, guitar, vocals; George Porter, Jr., bass, vocals (cut 7); Sammy Berfect, piano, organ; Bruce Elsensohn, piano (5), organ (14); George Rains, drums, percussion; Mark "Kaz" Kazanoff, tenor, baritone saxes; Saxy Boy, tenor sax; Keith Winkling, trumpet; Roberta Washington Ward, background vocals (8).

★ ★ ★ ★

On the romping r&b "Newborn Music," Robert Ward blissfully sings, "Music is a groove/I know that it got ta' git to ya!" That sums up *Fear No Evil*, R.W.'s welcome return from musical obscurity after a 20-year studio hiatus. The groove never dissipates and the tunes are gripping, thanks mainly to Ward's gritty, sweet-soul vocals and astounding guitar playing.

The former sideman for Wilson Pickett and Eddie Floyd, session guitarist for the Temptations, and one-time leader of the Ohio Untouchables (predecessor of funksters the Ohio Players), Ward deserves a Blues Comeback

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Player of the Year award for this rousing exercise in cruising through a variety of r&b tunes, ranging from a chuggin'-and-stomp'in' instrumental with blistering guitar solos ("K-Po-Kee") to a slow-burning, gospel blues prayer ("Lord Have Mercy On Me"). In between, there's "Your Love Is Real," a dance-floor cooker; the plaintive "Something For Nothing," filled with weeping guitar lines and moaning horns; and the beauty of the bunch, "Trying My Best," where Ward masterfully mirrors his soft-edged vocal inflections with a bubbly lead on his Fender.

Ward gets striking tones from his ancient Magnatone amplifier, which creates a shimmering, stereo vibrato effect (Lonnie Mack acknowledges Ward as his influence in this regard). Consequently, R.W.'s guitar brightens many numbers, especially "Forgive Me," where he splashes glistening chords as he painfully pleads for a pardon from his lover. Black Top has done well to insure Ward's success by providing him with topnotch support: the Kamikaze Horn section, which gives Ward's songs just the right amount of swing, and the Meters' bassist George Porter, Jr., who serves up a great floating bass line on "So Tired Of Wandering." (reviewed on CD) —Dan Ouellette



FULL CIRCLE

SECRET STORIES—Columbia 46890: PUMA; SECRET STORIES; A BRIGHTER DAY; THOUGHTS WHILE WAVING GOODBYE; PAU D'ARCO; 3 MUSES; MALIBU MIND; IN A CORNER; RUNNING BEAR; ANTHEM. (48:07)

Personnel: Karl Lundeberg, keyboards, vocals; Anders Bostrom, flutes; Philip Hamilton, vocals, percussion; Don Rieser, drums; Skuli Sverrisson, bass; Armando Marcal, Djalma Correa, percussion; Gilberto Gil, vocals (cut 3); Ricardo Silveira, acoustic guitar (7); Marcio Montarroyas, trumpet (3,8); Bendik, tenor sax (4,6); Billy Drewes, soprano, tenor saxes (10).

★ ★ ★

YELLOWJACKETS

GREENHOUSE—GRP 9630: FREEDOMLAND; GREENHOUSE; SEVEN STARS; INDIAN SUMMER; SPIRITS; BROWN ZONE; LIAM/RAIN DANCE; INVISIBLE PEOPLE; FREDA; PEACE. (60:54)

Personnel: Russell Ferrante, piano, synthesizers; Jimmy Haslip, bass; William Kennedy, drums; Bob Mintzer, tenor, soprano saxes, bass clarinet, alto flute, EWI; Alex Acuna, percussion; Steve Cross, synclavier; Bill Gable, vocals (8); Stuart Canin, violin (9); orchestra, arranged and conducted by Vince Mendoza (2,4,9).

★ ★ ★ ★

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Several factors provide clues to the Yellowjackets' "new" sound. Saxman Bob Mintzer is the perfect "sub" following Marc Russo's departure from the band. He delivers crisp, low, bass clarinet (cracks me up) and makes good use of the EWI, in addition to his tenor and soprano work. Russo was a strong voice, but Mintzer has more colors and a grittier approach.

Arranger Vince Mendoza strikes up the chamber orchestra on three cuts, writing parts that actually steer the music somewhere rather than stay in the background. He builds the sustained, haunting intro to "Greenhouse," which brightens into a 6/8 loping African groove. "Freedomland" begins with a Latin feel, but Kennedy straddles jazz and funk the whole way. As the drum-and-bass breakdown heats things up, Ferrante comes in with a slinking synth solo and really develops it nicely. They like that "Left Coast" shuffling funk-bop thing, like on "Brown Zone." Acuna's colorful antics on percussion always serve the music and pep things up.

Greenhouse was recorded in L.A. by long-time ECM engineer Jon Erik Kongshaug, who did their last album at his studio in Oslo. Haslip's fretless basswork sings, and he's a good agitator. Ferrante, a very promising composer, also offers subtle, engaging synth work. And William Kennedy is one of the underrated drummers of the day.

Members of Full Circle hail from Sweden, Iceland, and the U.S., and met at Berklee. They're truly a world-beat fusion, dealing with

various African and Brazilian hybrid rhythms, and for *Secret Stories* traveled to Rio de Janeiro to record with the noted Brazilian producer, Liminha. They create lush moods and a global atmosphere, but aren't really a jazz band, in a blowing, improvisational sense.

Full Circle's third Columbia album takes full advantage of the substantial vocal talents of Philip Hamilton, whether performing lyrics on the catchy "A Brighter Day" or just vocalizing, working a melody as he does on most of the tracks. They utilize the voice as the group Kittyhawk did in the early 1980s, and it may be their best lead instrument. Anders Bostrom and chief composer Karl Lundeberg, who've developed a sound like a slightly funkier Passport, don't come off sounding as inspired.

On the other hand, Skuli Sverrisson's bass is very out-front. He's an uninhibited burner in the Pastorius mode, swooping, soaring, and very melodic. With SS at the helm of the groove, they can change rhythmic gears in an instant. "Puma" shifts from radio-friendly Latin to blasting rock grooves on the chorus. There's no bebop here, but Full Circle makes it all swing. Brazilian percussionists Marcal and Correa blow some serious smoke on "Pau D'Arco" and "Running Bear," and guest trumpeter Marcio Montarroyas does some nice muted jamming on "A Brighter Day" and "In A Corner." He has an open, searching approach, like he's not sure exactly where he'll end up, and Full Circle needs a bit more of that type of freedom. (reviewed on CD) —Robin Tolleson

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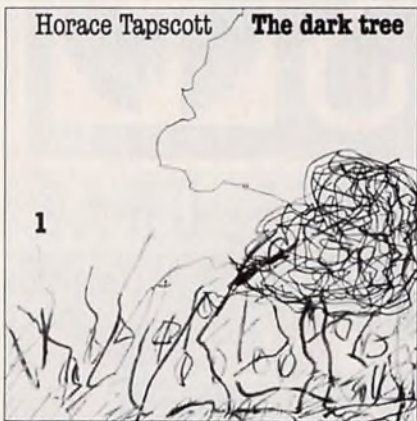
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hat

- expect the unexpected



HORACE TAPSCOTT hat ART CD 6053 THE DARK TREE I with John Carter, Cecil McBee & Andrew Cyrille. Recorded live December 14-17, 1989 at Catalina's Hollywood

When, in 1966, the people who award the Pulitzer Prize passed over their nominating committee's recommendation of Duke Ellington and declined to honor anyone that year, Ellington remarked wryly "It seems that Fate doesn't want me to become too famous too young." He was 67 at the time. Horace Tapscott is, at this writing, only 66, but it appears also as if "Fate" has conspired against his becoming famous at too early an age. Certainly his talents demand greater renown than he has so far been afforded. All but ignored by record companies over the years, Tapscott's work over the past decade would be completely undocumented were it not for a series of well-intentioned but barely visible albums on the West Coast-based Nimbus label. In fact, this is only his fourth recording, under his leadership, for another label: his first non-solo album since 1981; his first quartet date ever.

A portion of this neglect can be attributed to Tapscott's integrity. He has steadfastly refused to compromise his music or its presentation, to follow trends or the lure of the dollar. Reticent to travel early in his career, he instead decided to work within his community - one of the most economically and culturally underprivileged areas of Los Angeles - on a grass roots level. In 1981 he co-founded the Underground Musicians Association (since renamed U.G.M.A.A. - the Union of God's Musicians and Artists Ascension) to help find jobs for local musicians, preserve the Black community's cultural identity, and educate a larger audience in the wealth of that culture. He has led the Pan-African Peoples Orchestra since that period, sharing his music with the community (rather than selling it to the highest bidder), educating young instrumentalists like Arthur Blythe, David Murray, and Azar Lawrence among many others, and acting as an agent for positive change.

In a sense, Tapscott is repaying those teachers who nurtured his musical interests and abilities, who gave him a push in the right direction. Though born in Houston, Tapscott was bred in Los Angeles, and his musical coming of age took place along that city's famed Central Avenue. His mother gave him piano lessons early on, but the trombone was his first professional instrument. He credits West Coast big band legend Gerald Wilson as "... the cat that really took me off the streets and got me playing the instrument". But the Central Avenue scene itself was the true academy of higher learning, where Tapscott played alongside Sonny Criss, Charles Lloyd, Eric Dolphy, Don Cherry, Art Farmer, Dexter Gordon, and other worthy participants in various bands and jams led by such local heroes as Buddy Collette, Red Callender, and Wilson. Eventually, a taste of touring with Lionel Hampton convinced Tapscott that, just as a tree cannot be severed from its roots, L.A. was where he needed to be. Tapscott's first real recognition came in 1968-69, via two noteworthy, still satisfying, LPs. The earlier, a Prestige album entitled Sonny's Dream, was a showcase for the fine post-bop altoist Sonny Criss, and Tapscott composed and arranged all six pieces on the LP, in addition to conducting the ten-piece ensemble. The second, a Flying Dutchman album produced by Bob Thiele (John Coltrane's former Impulse producer), The Giant Is Awakened, was a double debut - Tapscott's debut as a leader, and altoist Arthur Blythe's debut on disc.

There's a curious "Yin and Yang" relationship between these two recordings. Sonny's Dream was subtitled "Birth Of The New Cool" - an obvious marketing attempt to draw parallels between Tapscott's finely wrought tenet arrangements and the mellifluous charts crafted by Johnny Carisi, Gerry Mulligan, John Lewis, and Gil Evans for Miles Davis nearly twenty years earlier. But - save that they both used "in-between" sized ensembles neither combo nor big band, and that tuba was an integral part of each - there was no sound basis for such a comparison. The word "Cool" in this context was apparently meant to soothe the potential listeners' concern that there be something confrontational or frightening about this music. Remember, though by 1968 and '69 the angriest, most explosive days of Free Black Music were fading into the past - John Coltrane, the movements' a figurehead, had died in 1967, and Albert Ayler had exchanged his cataclysmic howl for a pop/rock croon - this was still a period of fervent Black Power. Nevertheless, many record companies were anxious to reinstate traditional, pre-revolution, standards and bring some stability to the industry.

Tapscott's charts for Criss were potent, expressive, and passionate, though somewhat conservative by the period's "free" standards, and - except for the dedication of The Black Apostles to Malcolm X, Medgar Evers, and Martin Luther King Jr. - seemingly without a political subtext. In other words, a far cry from The Giant Is Awakened, which was music with a message. Fueled by the political and social unrest of the late '60s, this is music full of fire, foreboding, determination, and barely suppressed anger. Suggesting that The Giant - the Black Nation - was now roused and ready to control its own destiny, this album offered anthems to unity and

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record & cd reviews



VARIOUS ARTISTS

RETURN TO THE WIDE OPEN SPACES - Amazing 1021: BUSTER'S TUNE; HARD TIMES; 13TH FLOOR; THINGS AIN'T WHAT THEY USED TO BE; THESE FOOLISH THINGS; TWO BONES & A PICK; CITY LIGHTS; LUSH LIFE; NIGHT IN TUNISIA. (67:52) Personnel: David "Fathead" Newman, alto, tenor sax, flute; James Clay, tenor sax; Leroy Cooper, baritone sax; Dennis Dotson, trumpet; Cornell Dupree, guitar; Ellis Marsalis, piano; Chuck Rainey, bass; George Rains, drums.

ELLIS MARSALIS

ELLIS MARSALIS TRIO - Blue Note 5523: SYNDROME; EMILY; JUST SQUEEZE ME; LITTLE NILES; LIMEHOUSE BLUES; A MOMENT ALONE; LIL' BOY MAN; JITTERBUG WALTZ; THE GARDEN; CHAPTER ONE; I THOUGHT ABOUT YOU. (58:09) Personnel: Marsalis, piano; Bob "Rizzy" Hurst, bass; Jeff "Tain" Watts, drums.

PIANO IN E/SOLO PIANO - Rounder CD 2100: HALLUCINATIONS; DJANGO; JITTERBUG WALTZ; NICA'S DREAM; SO IN LOVE; FOURTH AUTUMN; ZEE BLUES. (38:42) Personnel: Marsalis, piano.

Musical decorum is not a virtue to be taken lightly, but one wishes for more excitement and melancholy in the playing of Ellis Marsalis. This will probably register on one and all as an heretical statement, and I don't mean any harm by it. I don't have any gripe with the success and values of any of the Marsalis clan, especially Papa Ellis. But there are these albums, which show that the pianist alone or with a trio is pretty placid; in the company of a band of

Texans he is more vigorous. In Return To The Wide Open Spaces (the title refers to the "Fathead" Newman/James Clay album, The Sound Of The Wide Open Spaces, recorded in 1960), Ellis has two features, "These Foolish Things" and "Lush Life." He digs in harder than he does on the other two albums, although his well-ordered style is the same. Behind the horns, he comps pro-pulsively, jumping right into the down-home blues feeling of these performances.

A live date from the Caravan of Dreams in Fort Worth, the album is foremost a collection of round-robin blues solos framed by ensemble beginnings and endings. Newman, Clay (who has been getting some long-overdue praise recently), and Cooper play earthy, soul-breasted solos. Dotson, a former Woody Herman band sideman, plays more alternate changes and sounds quite fresh. Dupree handles the guitar parts to a T (as in T-Bone Walker, the Texas bluesman). By the way, is that Newman playing the lead-off tenor solos on "City Lights" and "Night In Tunisia"? He's not listed in the credits on tenor.

Another portrait of Ellis emerges on the trio session. The liner notes address his ability to swing. A stronger impression is his even-tempered, well-thought-out exposition of melody, harmony, and improvisation. You find yourself thinking of the beauties of Wynton Kelly, Bill Evans, early Ahmad Jamal, and, oddly enough, early Denny Zeitlin. Bass and drums remain fairly restrained throughout, although "Limehouse Blues" steers off in a New Orleans parade groove. And, as "Syndrome," "A Moment Alone," "The Garden," and "Chapter One" indicate, Ellis does write tasteful and tuneful originals.

The light touch was also prominent during the pianist's solo concert in 1986, his farewell address to his hometown before he moved to Richmond, Virginia to teach. (He returned home to New Orleans three years later to teach at that city's university.) Much the same as on the trio album, you notice the flowing independent hands (classical training is evident) and the well-mannered approach. Bud Powell's "Hallucinations" flies, a brief warmup tribute to one of Ellis' influences, and Ellis' "Zee Blues" is a bitonal (?) or abstract blues, quite different from the funk of the Caravan of Dreams gig.

There's nothing "wrong" with these LPs. But then nothing exactly takes your breath away either. (reviewed on CD) - Owen Cordle

CARIBBEAN PARTY MIX

by Gene Santoro

The Caribbean is a cultural crossroads. The slave trade brought not just bodies but heritages, which some Caribbean nations didn't suppress as violently as the U.S. Here, only New Orleans - which is actually a Caribbean city - has managed to retain as much of its ancestral vitality and crossbreed it with other cultural formats: remember Jelly Roll Morton's famous line about jazz's "Spanish tinge"? In the Caribbean, whether the language is Spanish, Eng-

lish, or French, Afro-derived carnival and religious rites set the basic beats.

A Carnival Of Cuban Music (Rounder 5049; 62:40: ★★★★★) and Cuban Dance Party (Rounder 5050; 63:23: ★★★★★) are spinoffs of the PBS Routes Of Rhythm With Harry Belafonte series. Jazzbos may complain about the underrepresentation of Afro-Cuban improvising - one cut from Dizzy Gillespie's Big Band with Chano Pozo, "Manteca." But this compilation introduces the broad spectrum of Cuban music, from santeria chants to mambos to Ruben Blades' rock-influenced salsa, in an inviting way that, and helped by the fine notes, encourages further exploration.

A much-in-demand percussionist who attacks with whipsaw counterrhythms, Daniel

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Bunny Wailer: throaty voice, easy grace

Ponce is one of Cuba's interesting musical expatriates. *Chango Te Llama* (Mango 162 539 877; 39:18: ★★★★★) integrates Cuban roots with the musics of Ponce's adopted U.S., especially jazz. Teaming up with Blades' musical director Oscar Hernandez and other players on the vibrant New York Latin scene, like Milton Cardona and Mario Rivera, Ponce delivers challenging, butt-shaking sounds.

In the '50s, American sounds over "clear" radio stations from New Orleans and Florida reshaped how Jamaicans heard—and were, in turn, reshaped by them. Before then, Jamaican music—*mento*—was a calypso offshoot. The **Jolly Boys** hail from that period. Like Mexican *marachi*, *mento* is now artificial but can still be fun, as the gently-grooving, good-natured but lightweight *Sunshine 'N' Water* (Rykodisc 10187; 47:43: ★★½) demonstrates.

Joe Higgs was teacher to the likes of Bob Marley and Jimmy Cliff. He helped them pivot from r&b-influenced harmony and rock-steady styles into what became reggae. Appropriately enough, *Blackman Know Yourself* (Shanachie 43077; 34:07: ★★★★★) matches his husky and passionate vocals with the Wailers' taut, punching crossrhythms. Despite the years, Higgs has lost none of his intense social commitment. But he's a would-be revolutionary whose teachings you can dance to.

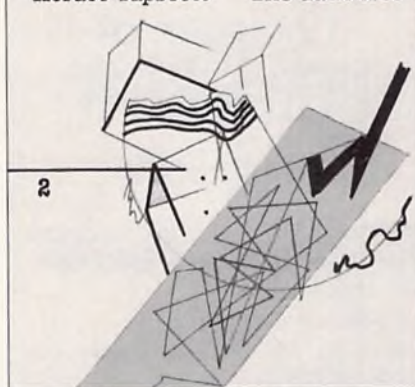
Like jazz, reggae is an umbrella term. On *Gumption* (Shanachie 43079; 39:33: ★★½), **Bunny Wailer** combines ska and roots-reggae with newer styles like dance-hall and *dub* while covering tunes by Toots Hibbert and his old compatriot Marley. Wailer's throaty voice rides the kaleidoscopic backings with easy grace. The result is a contemporary blend that's less ragingly political than typical Wailer. The established post-Marley group **Black Uhuru** has always followed its syncretic impulses. So *Dub Now* (Mesa R2 79022; 44:19: ★★) mixes rather empty political rhetoric, *dub*'s sudden vocal and instrumental drop-outs, snarling guitars, gentle acoustic picking, and chameleonic synths.

One of *dub*'s current stars is the melodica-wielding **Augustus Pablo**, who weighs in with the punningly-titled *Blowing With The Wind* (Shanachie 43076: ★★★★★). As outstanding *dub*, Pablo's music is about texture; in that way, it's like Eno's ambient music—except that you dance to Pablo. But Pablo's also making a typically Jamaican case for the musical usefulness of anything at hand, even the lowly melodica. Remember that reggae mixes blew U.S. and U.K. producers through the studio

hat

— expect the unexpected

Horace Tapscott The dark tree



HORACE TAPSCOTT hat ART CD 6083
THE DARK TREE 2
with John Carter, Cecil McBee & Andrew Cyrille. Recorded live December 14-17, 1989 at Catalina's Hollywood

strength of purpose, replacing the earlier decade's cathartic, shouting aggression with a rigorous design and noble character.

In important ways, these two volumes of *The Dark Tree* pick up where *The Giant Is Awakened* left off. There are direct links—most specifically the composition *The Dark Tree*, which appears on both hat Art volumes as well as the earlier quintet LP, but similar moods, too, of seething emotions seeking release, of turbulence held in check by wisdom and responsibility. *The Dark Tree* itself leaves an indelible impression: a sturdy trunk, roots that dig deep in the soil, branches that stretch out to hug the sky.

Tapscott's music has always been anchored by a firm foundation: in his tenet charts he often had tuba, baritone sax, trombone, and acoustic bass in the same register, holding down the bottom, while on *The Giant Is Awakened* he used two bassists and his own strong left hand to support the scaring Blythe spirit. Here Cecil McBee alone suffices to fill that crucial bass role, the sine that holds the music together over long jams and ostinato, effortlessly choosing notes and accents buoyant and bobbing like a cork upon water—and his solos are dead! In tandem with the life-affirming, propulsive pulse of Andrew Cyrille, they create a bubbling cauldron of rhythmic possibilities. Cyrille's exuberance overflows his drum set—hear his body percussion on Volume 2's *Nyja's Theme*, where he literally becomes the music.

Clarinetist John Carter is a valid contrast, and complement, to Tapscott's keyboard. Adamant about extending the clarinet's range and expressive potential, he squeals and smears sounds like a snake snagged in barbed wire (for example, Volume 1's *Dark Tree*), or spikes his melodies with ferocious outbursts of ecstatic energy (Volume 2). He's a blues player in the Jimmy Hamilton mold, with a few unique twists—meaning a clean, delicate line that occasionally drops into a mumble, or sets off on seemingly unrelated tangents that eventually, inevitably, climb into the stratosphere, cavort there for a time defying gravity, and finally click into place. You may encounter moments where he approaches the unfettered abandon of Eric Dolphy—pure pleasure—and swings through sheer persistence.

Which brings us to Tapscott's keyboard prowess—pianism which, I'm sure, would be drastically underrated, were it rated at all. The unfortunate truth is that of all our surviving master pianists, Horace Tapscott is among the least known. Like his peers—Randy Weston, Andrew Hill, Mal Waldron—Tapscott has developed a personal style out of Monk. He can spank the keys percussively or caress them tenderly, splash extravagant chords or slice them lean and razor-sharp. But perhaps his own individual signature is his rhapsodic zeal. And a clue to the power and authority of his approach comes from an acknowledged influence—Vladimir Horowitz. Samples of Tapscott's eclectic technique and expansive conception are everywhere audible on these two discs. But do notice the full, ringing tone and chords crashing in waves (comparable to a Hokusai painting of same, elsewhere he etches slivers of phrase with sparse, spontaneous calligraphic precision) on Volume 1's *Dark Tree*. Or *A Dress For Renee*: ruminative, with a lyrical poignance that sometimes resembles Tadd Dameron's ballad writing. Lino's Pad finds him grabbing fistfuls of notes, or splattering them like raindrops pounding the pavement. Frequently (especially both *Dark Trees*, and *Nyja's Theme*) he spins a hypnotic, dense fabric of sound, Waldron-like in its insistence, peppered with dissonances. Sandy and Niles (heard in a full-bodied arrangement on the '68 *Sonny's Dream*, by the way) shows how Tapscott probes into his material. His rhapsodic nature instigates epic demands; yet, though at times florid, his phrasing is never embroidered with over-elaborations, rather, albeit thickly textured, it's often stripped down to its essentials. This is vigorous expression, exposing thought, exposition, repetition, variation, culminating in dramatic gesture.

The compositions themselves are a varied lot. The craggy fanfare *One For Lately* was written by trombonist Thurman Green; the rest are Tapscott's, and notable for their occasionally curious construction. Tapscott likes waltz time—*Nyja's Theme* is a rocking 3/4. *Sketches Of Drunken Mary* is in 8/8. Lino's Pad can be a labyrinth for the unsuspecting improviser, opening with a 7/4 martial cadence, then alternating five bars of 7/4 with eight bars of 4/4 in an unusual 13 bar structure. Some of the pieces are character portraits—Niles is Tapscott's son, and Sandy was his childhood friend; Drunken Mary was a fixture in Horace's Houston neighborhood; Renee is one of his daughters. But, in truth, they reveal more about the performer than they do their dedicatees, as intriguing vehicles for improvisation. The result is music of power and drama, a beauty, spirit, and significance. It's Horace Tapscott's music, and it's a shame we had to wait so long to hear it.

— Art Lange/July 1990

Volume 1 = hat ART CD 6083

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record & cd reviews

walls in part because they were done on such "primitive" equipment. Jamaican engineers broke all the rules, and came up with a sound the rest of the world copied and adapted. Pablo continues that upending tradition in an understated fashion. (reviewed on cassette)

Nailing down the beats of countless reggae classics were drummer **Sly Dunbar** and bassist **Robbie Shakespeare**. Now producers, they've issued *Sly & Robbie Presents*. . . *DJ Riot* (Mango 539 887; 45:58: ★★★½), a collection of hot reggae rappers. This more uptempo dancehall style began on the backs of flatbed trucks with portable sound systems. As they toured the slums blasting hits, DJs "toasted" between and over the tunes. Soon they began dubbing out the vocals to mix their own backing tracks. That led to dancehall and its U.S. cousin, hip-hop. The toasters' wordplay is slower than rappers'. But there's plenty of crosstalk between the two forms: take, for example, Shinehead, who was born in Jamaica but lives in the U.S.

Soca—short for soul calypso—is Trinidad/Tobago's updating of calypso, which has long served as the country's combination newsletter/gossip carrier over the air waves. Soca injects the older form with disco's beat and synths while often eliminating the more pointed social commentary. So it can wind up seeming pretty flat and repetitive off the dance floor.

Tobago-born and U.S.-raised **Nelson** is one of soca's prime movers, but the uneven *When The World Turns Around* (Shanachie 64024; 46:21: ★★★½) displays a bit more

musical breadth, drawing on African, Latin, and reggae beats. The album's best tune, in fact, is called "Baldhead Rasta," a hilarious parody delivered in impeccable reggae. From **David Rudder**, another soca pioneer who's done better before with, say, *Haiti* (Sire/Warner Bros.), comes *1990* (Sire/Warner Bros.; 53:15: ★★★). Unfortunately, the "crossover" charts swaddle and stifle Rudder's soaring voice and heartfelt political lyrics with the squishest kinds of contemporary American r&b and "international" disco.

Haiti's ritual-and-carnival-based rhythms grew into intensely percolating pop styles, like *rara* and *compas*, which have dominated Francophone Caribbean music. A fine, varied survey of Haitian sounds comes via filmmaker **Jonathan Demme's** soundtrack album, *Konbit* (A&M SP 5281: ★★★★★), which offers cuts by the Marleyesque singer Manno Charlemagne as well as New York Haitian community mainstays Tabou Combo and a suggestive cover of the Neville Brothers' "My Blood." (reviewed on LP)

Zouk—Creole slang for party—is the defter Francophone version of soca: a seductive mating of disco and Afro-pop with the traditional and Haitian-dominated pop sounds of Martinique, Guadeloupe, and the Antilles. Like much international pop, it comes via Paris; Paris-based Kassav is *zouk's* prime practitioner. But **Gazoline**, on *Zouk Obsession* (Shanachie 64021; 35:43: ★★★), turns in a credibly sinuous and varied outing. (reviewed on CD except where noted) **DB**

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MAHLATHINI & THE MAHOTELLA QUEENS

THE LION ROARS—Shanachie 43081: SEIPATI; PHELETSONG YA LERATO; THUTO KE SENOTILOLO; KHUBETSWANA YESO; AMAQA WE ONGQASHIYO; MASOLE A BANANA; KWA VOLONDIYA; MOHLANKANA WAKA; SIMENYIWE; LEBALA KA NNA. (34:42)

Personnel: Mahlathini, lead vocals; Mahotella Queens (individual members not identified), lead and backing vocals; Makgona Tsohle Band (individual members not identified).

★ ★ ★ ½

MAHOTELLA QUEENS

MARRIAGE IS A PROBLEM—Shanachie

43080: SELAILAI; MOKOKA; BA BAKOTO; DIKHOMO; LESELESE; JIVE MAKHONA; MANTSHI; KGAREBE TSAGA MOTHUSI; THONTHODI; NYALO EA TSHWENYA. (26:55)

Personnel: Mahotella Queens (individual members not identified), lead and backing vocals; Makgona Tsohle Band (individual members not identified); other vocalists not identified.

★ ★ ★

Riding the crest of world-beat music popularity are South African "groaner" Mahlathini (aka the Lion of Soweto, aka Simon Nkabinde) and his angelic-voiced trio, the Mahotella Queens. Although Western audiences have only recently discovered their invigorating beat, buoyant vocals, and exuberant melodies, Mahlathini and the Mahotella Queens have been igniting dance floors in South Africa since the mid-'60s, minus several years when the Queens dropped out to raise families.

These two "new" albums are actually collections of early work never released in this country—a fact mentioned nowhere in the very sketchy liner notes. I was initially suspicious, when upon reviewing the accompanying press release I discovered the material on the CDs was culled from "vintage recordings." Was this going to be another dredging of sub-par work to capitalize on a group's popularity? My suspicions were quickly put to rest once I gave

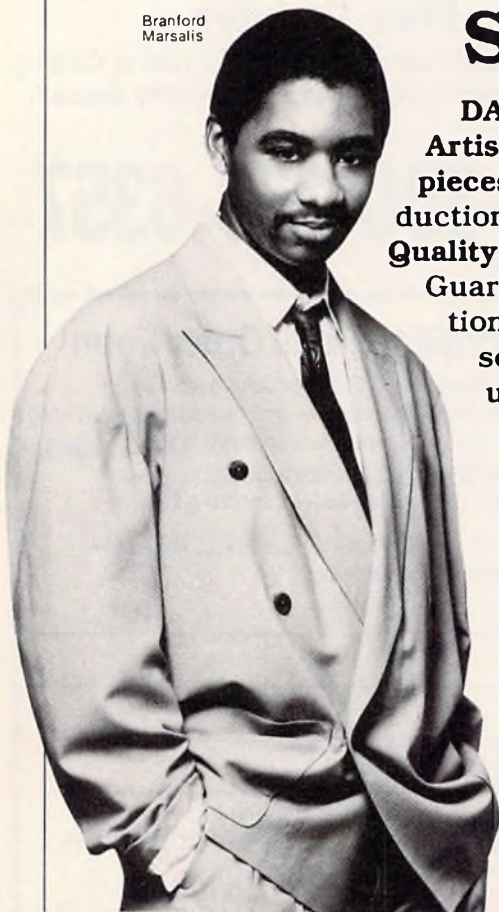
the discs a listen. As a matter of fact, the early Mahlathini and Mahotella Queens collaborations are just as spirited as their work together on later albums. Plus, there's no concession to playing for Western audiences (i.e., no English lyrics).

The best album of the two is *The Lion Roars*, even though the raspy-voiced Mahlathini enigmatically appears on only five of the 10 songs. His Wolfman Jack-like croaks, growls, and roars are perfectly complemented by the Queens, whose jubilant, soaring vocal harmonies are reminiscent of the Lennon Sisters. The rippling and swirling electric guitar licks and accelerating drum and percussive rhythms provided by the Makgona Tsohle Band set the entire feast of Afropop into motion.

Marriage Is A Problem is less successful, primarily because of the absence of the Lion's vocals. Apparently the Queens worked with other male groaners for a time. Again, more informative liner notes might have shed some light on why the women singers sang their call-and-response choruses with inferior partners. Another shortcoming is the skimpy CD length for both albums. Combining the two onto one CD and supplying background material on all the important players would have improved an already entertaining retrospective on one of the best world-beat bands. (reviewed on CD)

—Dan Ouellette

Branford Marsalis



Michael Brecker

Saxophonists

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DUKE'S ELEGANCE

by John McDonough

To my wife, November 7 is our wedding anniversary. To me, it's the night in 1940 **Duke Ellington** was recorded in Fargo, North Dakota. (And thus, a handy reminder of my wedding anniversary.) Those recordings are now complete on two CDs as *Duke Ellington At Fargo: Golden Anniversary Edition* (VJC 1019/20; 77:53/76:40; ★★★★★). The movie *Our Town* was in release then, and contained the famous scene where Emily Gibbs relives one day of her life. She tries to pick an important day but can't decide. "Then pick an unimportant day," Fay Bainter tells her. "Pick the least important day of your life. It will be important enough." That's how one feels about this music, magnificently recorded from the bandstand with a depth and vividness that far outstrips the more definitive RCA Victors. Jimmy Blanton was never captured so fully. And the reeds sing behind Joe Nanton on "Sidewalks Of New York." Fargo was about as unimportant as it could get for a band: a fast one-nighter in a nowhere town somewhere out in the American backwater. This music is a monument to the wonders of the ordinary in the world of Ellingtonia.

There is certainly nothing ordinary about the four Carnegie Hall Concert sets from Prestige, which document the biggest moments of Ellington's career to that point. The first, *January*

1943 (2PCD 34004-2; 63:00/72:00: ★★★★★), is probably the best, certainly the most historic, and, with the equivalent of three LPs on two CDs, the best value. The centerpiece is the premier of *Black Brown & Beige*, Ellington's long program piece depicting the Black experience. If you view it in this context, however, you will be holding it to a standard it cannot meet, self-imposed though it may be. My advice is to forget the literary pretenses, take the pretty spackling Ellington stuffs into the cracks at face value, and just enjoy the self-sustaining pieces for the rich miniatures they are. If parts of *BB&B* have stood the test of time—and the stately "Come Sunday," "West Indian Dance," and "Sugar Hill Shuffle" certainly have—isn't that enough? With seething versions of "Ko-Ko," "Jack The Bear," "Bo-jangles," "Cotton Tail," and more, it's also an excellent introductory set for people who want to meet Ellington at his best. The sound, however, could be, and has been, fatter.

The other concerts cover the transition to the postwar years. *December 1944* (2PCD 24073-2; 45:00/49:00: ★★★½) brings a new repertoire, a new concert piece (the playful *Perfume Suite* containing "Dancers In Love"), a slimmed down *BB&B*, and new voices (Al Sears, Cat Anderson, Taft Jordan) to the band. The critical mass Ellington commanded at Fargo has slipped from his hands. This is more apparent in the next concert, *January 1946* (2PCD 24074-2; 48:00/50:00: ★★★½). *BB&B* gets smaller still and Wilbur DeParis is a

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THEORY AND MUSICIANSHIP FOR THE CREATIVE JAZZ IMPROVISER

by michael longo



record & cd reviews

shadow of Joe Nanton. This was the height of Duke's Musicraft years, maybe the nadir of his recording career. This concert program presents music that's either stuffy ("Transblucency") or bland ("Sono"). The last concert, *December 1947* (2PCD 24075-2; 47:00/53:00: ★★★), is a marginal improvement. Johnny Hodges plays a package of his staples, and the band flares up nicely on "Harlem Airshaft." But *Liberian Suite*, this year's event piece, is pretty thin soup. And more than once, Ellington's writing tends to swim around in a lot of ornate, annunciatory, and seemingly perpetual fanfares. Often non sequiturs, they promise more than they deliver. It may be a habit one acquires padding out long concert works, where whole notes stretch like taffy.

In 1981, the Meritt Record Society (Box 156, Hicksville, NY 11802) began issuing all of Ellington's weekly Sunday afternoon radio shows for the Treasury Department. Each program was an hour and occupies one LP (no CDs). Sound is consistently excellent. After nearly 10 years, the series recently crossed the finish line at 48 volumes (available individually—D.E.T.S. 1-48: ★★★½) from April 1945 to August 1946. There is much repetition, some pop tunes never recorded, and a few bloopers, as when Al Hibbler gets confused and sings "Laughing on the inside, crying on the outside" (Vol. 40). But it is certainly the deepest look ever assembled into a single Ellington period on record and a feast for serious collectors.

Ellington's formative 1927-30 period is covered in *The Okeh Ellington* on Columbia (C2K 46177; 75:00/77:00: ★★★). There's frankly a limited amount of important music here. But we know now that it was music that was heading somewhere. Many of the pieces Ellington would play to the end of his days ("The Mooche," "Black And Tan") begin here (and on companion volumes already out on MCA and Bluebird). That gives these records, even the lesser ones, surpassing historical importance. The preeminent voice is not Ellington's or the band's, but Bubber Miley's trumpet. The breaks, the clarinet trios, the boxy attacks would all soon drop away. Miley is the one element that would endure and from which Ellington would feed and evolve. Among the landmarks: "Black Beauty," an early Ellington non-blues melody; and "Mood Indigo," his breakthrough in blending sounds.

By 1960 (actually long before), Ellington had become a self-contained, vertically-integrated cocoon of a man, willfully uninterested in outside fashion. This explains the enduring free spirit and independence of Columbia's reissue, *Three Suites* (CK 46825; 61:00: ★★★). *Peer Gynt* and *The Nutcracker* are a buffet of Ellington trademarks from the eccentric to just good, swing writing ("Volga Vouty") applied to outside material. And *Suite Thursday* is original Ellington at his best. As a reissue, though, CBS might have provided recording dates.

Finally, from MusicMasters comes a batch of unreleased studio versions of mostly familiar pieces from the band's last big peak in the mid-'60s ("Circus Train" and "Swamp Goo," which could have come out of the '20s) to its last, sometimes wobbly, years: 1965-72 (MusicMasters 5041-2-C; 66:23: ★★★½). Yet, from 1972 there comes the wonderful "Woods," a mid-tempo piece for reeds that has nothing to do with the number on RCA Victor's *Eastbourne Performance* LP. **DB**

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SOFTWIND INSTRUMENTS - SWITZERLAND

1 ROY HARGROVE.

"Proclamation" (from DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH, Novus) Hargrove, trumpet; Ralph Moore, tenor sax; Antonio Hart, alto sax; Geoff Keezer, piano, composer; Charles Fambrough, bass; Ralph Peterson, drums.

I haven't heard too much of Roy Hargrove but I have a feeling that was him. I heard a lot of Blue Mitchell in his approach on this particular tune. It was good and fluid, nice phrases. It's a nice piece, huh? I'd give that 4 stars.

2 FREDDIE HUBBARD AND WOODY SHAW.

"The Eternal Triangle" (from THE ETERNAL TRIANGLE, Blue Note) Hubbard, Shaw, trumpets; Kenny Garrett, alto sax; Mulgrew Miller, piano; Ray Drummond, bass; Carl Allen, drums.

"The Eternal Triangle." Freddie Hubbard and Woody Shaw. Freddie is one of my biggest influences. When I was in Brazil, I used to practice with Freddie Hubbard solos off the records. I'd do that more often than I'd practice with my music books. I owe a great deal to Freddie Hubbard. If there's any sense in my playing it really came from transcribing his solos. Freddie was the one I started with. His sound. His assurance on the horn. His articulation. His fluidity is another thing I admire. The only thing I wish he would do in these recent years is stop worrying about high notes, because he doesn't need high notes. Woody plays a beautiful solo, too. I admire Woody, but Freddie is an idol. 4 stars.

3 THE HARPER BROTHERS.

"Portrait Of Jennie" (from THE HARPER BROTHERS, Verve) Philip Harper, trumpet; Stephen Scott, piano; Michael Bowie, bass; Winard Harper, drums.

The trumpet player certainly has listened to Clifford Brown with strings. "Portrait Of Jennie." I don't recognize the player but I heard some influence of Freddie Hubbard as well as a lot of Clifford Brown, although he's got a big, fat sound, this player. The only thing I didn't particularly like was that the drummer was playing something that should've been a bossa nova and sometimes sounds like a bolero. The rhythm wasn't defined to my taste. I would give it 4 stars.

MB: It's the Harper Brothers.

CR: It's very dangerous to pick up a tune that's been so well established by a genius like Clifford. It's very difficult to do something original if you've listened to those versions a lot. That's what confused me. From what I know, Philip has a lot of influence from Lee Morgan, but in this tune you don't hear that. You hear some other influences. I think Philip Harper is a very wonderful trumpet player.

CLAUDIO RODITI

by Michael Bourne

Brazilian trumpeter Claudio Roditi calls himself the Gemini Man, a musician with twin hearts in Brazil and jazz. Even when his groove is samba, the sound of his trumpet hearkens back to the mainstream of Lee Morgan. He was born in Rio in 1946, but his family also lived in the countryside of Minas Gerais. He settled in Rio in 1960, just in time to experience the bossa nova scene. Roditi moved to Boston in 1970 to study at Berklee and settled in New York in 1976 where he first worked with Bob Mover. Other gigs followed with Charlie Rouse, Dom Salvador, Amaury Tristao, several years with Herbie Mann, and eventually his ongoing musical relationship with Paquito D'Rivera.

Nowadays, he's a regular with the Dizzy Gillespie United Nation Orchestra. Roditi's own music is featured on five albums as a bandleader, the most recent being *Slow Fire* and *Gemini Man*



(both on Milestone), and he's recorded something new for Candid titled *Two Of Swords*. "I'm planning to do more gigs on my own, and take a band on the road," he said. "It doesn't mean I'm quitting Dizzy or Paquito, but I have my own music—and it's always the combination of the Gemini Man. Sam-bop!"

This was Roditi's first Blindfold Test. He was given no prior information about the recordings.

4 RANDY BRECKER AND ELIANE ELIAS.

"Splash" (from AMANDA, Passport) Brecker, trumpet and synthesized trumpet; Elias, keyboards; Jeff Mironov, guitar; Will Lee, bass; Chris Parker, drums.

I cannot place the album, but I'm quite sure this is Eliane Elias and Randy Brecker. Right from the melody, I heard a big Brazilian influence in the composition. I was first thinking of Marcio Montarroyos, the Brazilian trumpet player—who, by the way, is very influenced by Randy Brecker. I heard Eliane in there, and then the synthesized trumpet player had to be Randy. The piece is beautiful. It's very Brazilian in the design of the composition. Brazilian composers from the bossa nova on have been searching for different forms. The forms are elongated and a lot of Brazilian songs modulate into different keys, then come back. American writers don't write that way usually. I don't know who wrote this, but it's lovely, stimulating for my ears. The solos were very good. I'll give this one 4 stars.

5 ROY ELDRIDGE.

"Dale's Wail" (from DALE'S WAIL, Verve) Eldridge, trumpet; Oscar Peterson, organ; Barney Kessel, guitar; Ray Brown, bass; Jo Jones, drums.

Swinging, eh? I never heard Roy with an organ. There were things in the style that are unmistakably Roy Eldridge: the shake that he took right out of Louis Armstrong, the high register, and the way the solo keeps

going towards a climax. And there's a fuzziness in the sound, even with the mute. That was great. 4 stars.

6 LEE MORGAN.

"Since I Fell For You" (from The Best Of Lee Morgan, Blue Note) Morgan, trumpet; Sonny Clark, piano; Doug Watkins, bass; Art Taylor, drums; Rudy Van Gelder, engineer.

What fantastic clarity in this recording! Beautiful, eh? To me, this is the ultimate. It doesn't happen to too many people to develop your craft to such an extent that two notes and it's obvious who it is. Of course it's Lee Morgan—the sound, the articulation, the phrasing; and then there's the obvious stuff like the half-valves he did so beautifully and in such a personal way. I know the tune but can't remember the title.

I give Lee Morgan 5 stars any time. There's something about Lee's playing I liked from the very first time I heard him. Two things attracted me, and I think the first thing is that his sound goes out. It can be aggressive at times, but his sound is someone giving out what he has. And the other thing is that he had such a rhythmic approach. Being exposed to Latin music, especially Brazilian music, rhythm was always attractive to me, and his way of using rhythm was very much in harmony with the way I think. I've always felt closest to Lee's approach and also transcribed Lee's solos. Freddie Hubbard played so much stuff that I wanted to play, but Lee Morgan was closest to my heart. DB