

Zappa's Back! • Arturo Sandoval • David Sanborn Blindfolded

# DOWNBEAT

Jazz, Blues & Beyond

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# RED HOT!

Bobby Watson's  
Horizon Burns



Summertime Sax: Joe Lovano • Jane Ira Bloom • Gary Thomas • Houston Person





ANDY FREEBERG

**Bobby Watson & Horizon**



ENID FARBBER

**Arturo Sandoval**



TERI BLOOM

**Joe Lovano**



MARK HANAUER

**Frank Zappa**

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# DOWN BEAT

Jazz, Blues & Beyond

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The Horizon is moving up: (clockwise from top left) Edward Simon, Essiet Okun Essiet, Terrell Stafford, Bobby Watson, and Victor Lewis



# Bop Beyond Motown

BOBBY WATSON & HORIZON

By Josef Woodard

Is youth, in fact, wasted on the young? Of course, it's a loaded question. In jazz, the parade of young, hot players have conspired to shift the focus of the jazz industry onto them—a trend normally more endemic to the pop music world. If youth reins supreme, how do you account for a mighty group like Horizon? Co-led by the eminent 40ish team of saxist Bobby Watson and drummer Victor Lewis, Horizon is one of the brightest examples of a contemporary jazz group upholding its hard-bop integrity while still entertaining the troops and allowing hints of r&b to flow through its veins.

The band's latest, *Post-Motown Bop*, is the strongest and most finely chiseled of Horizon's now three albums for Blue Note (see "Reviews" Apr. '91). They've truly come of age, emphasizing subtle interaction within the quintet's drive-train and maintaining a sporting attitude—call it a young-blood disposition.

Lewis feels that players of his generation need to recognize that they need to take the reins—particularly in the wake of Art Blakey's recent passing. "It's time for us to pay more attention to taking the ball and leading in our own ways—for the sake of the whole jazz musical community. In other words, to try to uphold the tradition. The Art Blakeys and the Elvin Joneses are Wyatt Earps to us. The Kenny Clarkes were the Wyatt Earps to them—keeping law and order and keeping the level of the music up."

Maturity is a many-faceted concept, and accessibility is not a dirty word for Watson and Lewis—musicmakers smack dab in the middle of their careers, and in a middle generation between the vets and the upstarts. Horizon is eager to forge a new kind of bop suited to the '90s. Ironically, while a lot of younger players are rediscovering earlier modes of jazz (Wynton Marsalis is currently diving backwards toward jazz's early roots) and often avoid things blatantly commercial, Horizon tempers its "serious" musicality with an implicit sense of funk and groove. So what's age got to do with it?

Watson is a genial man with a wide, warm smile and large, open ears. A touch of grey hair is sprinkled around his youthful face. This spring, he agrees to meet for an interview after an afternoon workshop at Cal Arts, outside of Los Angeles. But, catching wind of an African drumming class wafting through the hallowed halls, he wants to go check it out. He's lured by the source.

Muffled, polyrhythmic drums provide a fitting backdrop for a discussion of Watson's rising star both in Horizon and his "other" gig, the decade-old 29th Street Saxophone Quartet—now making its major domestic-label splash with *Underground*. His personal horizon is looking good.

Upstairs, Watson runs into flutist James Newton, a mainstay in the Cal Arts jazz program. They instantly engage in a duet of

mutual admiration. "You're the one, man," says Newton. "No, you're the one, you're the one," Watson comes back. "I'm just a squirrel trying to get a nut." Newton pauses and laughs: "Well, it must be a big tree."

Watson is involved in a bigger tree than his reputation would sometimes suggest. He first entered the scene as the brilliant young alto man with Art Blakey from 1979 to '84, has cut over a dozen solo albums (mostly on Red and other import labels), four 29th Street projects, and a heap of guest shots. Now enters *Post-Motown Bop*. The album serves as a tidy statement of purpose for the band. On it, Horizon serves up basically a refigured hard-bop set, shifting from the '70s-era standards of Watson's "In Case You Missed It" and Lewis' "7th Avenue" to a couple of hoary standards to hybridized original groovers—all in a strictly acoustic mode.

They're not interested in painting themselves into an elitist corner. "Everything I do is people-oriented," Watson confesses. "I don't put things together to try and impress other musicians. I don't write that way and I don't think that way when I'm playing. I'm playing for the listener. Not that I'm looking down on or trying to milk the audience, but I'm trying to take the people along with me. I don't really care what the musicians think. I learned that from Art."

*Post-Motown Bop* is more than just a clever moniker. As Watson explains, "I grew up listening to so much of that stuff, I feel that I know the idiom. Some of the ground we're breaking is rhythmic because of our background in the Motown thing. With Motown music, they had eight or nine things going on at once. Everything had to be right. It's the same with what we do; every tune we do has a specific thing that Victor does, and that everyone does."

There was also a matter of genre identification: "People always ask you what you're playing: 'Is it AACM? Is it M-Base?' I said, 'Let me think of a name. It's Post-Motown Bop—PMB.' It sounds silly, but the more I thought about it, it's really what we're doing. That's where we're at in history."

The ongoing *tête-à-tête* of soulmates Watson and Lewis is a portrait in rapport. They met in 1979, jamming together at guitarist Hiram Bullock's place; Watson knew Bullock from the University of Florida, while Lewis played with Bullock in David Sanborn's band. Watson remembers that "we'd be having incredible jam sessions where Victor would just be painting, for lack of a better word."

Watson called on Lewis' painterly approach for his first solo album, *All Because Of You*. Almost a decade later, Lewis was looking for a project to sink his teeth into. Three years ago, the drummer pitched the saxman. As Lewis says, "I always dug Bobby's musical spirit and also the fact that we're both Midwest boys—he's from Kansas City and I'm from Omaha, Nebraska. We have what I call that Midwest politeness and camaraderie."

After years of freelancing, working with Sanborn, Woody Shaw, Stan Getz, and countless others, Lewis appreciates the degree of creative self-determination in running Horizon. "It's a different head you have coming in as a super sideman. You think, 'What does he want? How can I help him here?' Now, it's working as a director as opposed to a psychic," Lewis laughs.

Inevitably, much as the central core and the band attitude remains constant, Horizon's personnel is susceptible to changes in lineup. One way the co-leaders keep up their own level of quality is by carefully choosing young players—another lesson bequeathed by Blakey.

And they aren't only looking for bebop pedigree. At present, pianist Edward Simon's workload pulls him in several different directions: the po-Mo-bop vein of Horizon, Brazilian sonorities with Herbie Mann, fusion and funk with Kevin Eubanks, Latin jazz with Paquito D'Rivera, M-Base mazes with Greg Osby, and straight salsa gigs—actually the tradition he has the deepest roots in.

"I'm very young and I believe that I'm still finding myself," the Venezuelan-born, 21-year-old Simon says. "I'm very open to a lot of different things. The more I find out about music, the more open I get. It makes it so that when you go back to another thing that



# FOUR-SIDED SWING



On the Street: (l-r) Bobby Watson, Rich Rothenberg, Ed Jackson, and Jim Hartog

In the mid-'70s, the idea of a sax quartet ranked not too far ahead of accordion quintets in terms of audience potential. As of now, it's much more than a novel notion. The field is led by three groups: the World Saxophone Quartet circles around and through the jazz tradition, the S.F. Bay Area-based ROVA Sax Quartet explores further new-music reaches, and the 29th Street Saxophone Quartet—whose new *Underground* is their most mature effort yet—is mostly a centrist organization, bearing the closest relationship to the big-band sax section which

you've done, it makes it fresher."

Recently, Essiet Okun Essiet replaced bassist Carroll Dashiell. The newest addition to Horizon is the 24-year-old trumpeter Terrell Stafford, who Watson first caught in Washington, D.C. As Stafford recalls, "When Melton [Mustafa, the first Horizon trumpeter] decided to go back with Count Basie, it opened up a spot for me. It's a great experience playing with these guys."

It's also a rare experience, a rare gig. In the great jazz tradition, Horizon is all about the perennial equilibrium between freedom and structure. In a given set, the established order is always subject to change. "I might just play a theme and they know where I'm going," Watson asserts. "If the bass player knows that he's supposed to start the tune, he'll take the initiative. I'm trying to make it more equal in terms of everybody being able to come to the forefront. The [29th Street] Sax Quartet influenced me in that way."

But if the 29th Street Saxophone Quartet ventures out onto various conceptual limbs in the course of a gig or an album, Horizon has thus far remained fairly controlled. But Watson sees room for expansion in the near future.

"I feel like people put me in a bag. They think I want everything right down the middle. But I don't. I think the next Horizon record is going to be another thing in terms of even more of what everybody has been hearing—certain concepts that we've been wanting to get to. It would mean more free elements in the playing, more chromaticism, maybe."

Watson admits that his path has had its frustrations, given his discography's relative lack of exposure and the lingering reputation as a bop-fixated Blakey graduate, but he feels that—with the help of Horizon—he's now reaching a point of artistic ripening. "I wanted to be peaking right around 40, to just now be coming into my thing. I figure it takes that long.

"The bad part about the whole youth movement in jazz is that a lot of the young guys feel that they can go around us to get where they need to be. It's not true. They still have to go through us. But it's good for the music, ultimately. Everybody is getting into jazz. I go to clinics now and little kids—nine or 10 years old—come up to me and say, 'Can you play 'Mo' Better Blues?'" Sure, I know

sparked the idea.

The 29th Street Quartet is also the youngest of the three, having been formed a decade ago, with Bobby Watson completing the official lineup eight years ago. In 1980, alto saxist Ed Jackson was recently out of the New England Conservatory and in need of artistic stimulation. Although the World Sax Quartet had started to make a modest splash by then, the context was still fairly radical.

"I was just out of college then," says Jackson, "and when you're in college, it's not unusual to do unusual things. I knew the outside world wouldn't totally embrace it." Jackson called up schoolmate Jim Hartog, who happened to live on 29th Street in New York City. By 1982, tenor player Rich Rothenberg had become the third side of the square. Among the list of saxists who've passed through the 29th Street ranks before Watson joined up are Marty Ehrlich, Kenny Garrett, and Steve Wilson.

When Hartog first began pushing for Watson, Jackson was initially reluctant. "Then, Bobby had a hard-bop, very mainstream kind of thing happening. Then I find out that, once he joins the group, he's open to a whole lot of ideas."

Four albums and many tours—on both sides of the Atlantic—later, the quartet has become solidified. "It's such a sparse sound," comments Watson, "you have to build from within that sound. You don't get any help. It's just baritone holding the rhythm down. There aren't any cymbal crashes to build you up. Every chorus has to be built more and more intensely with the ideas and intensity and range."

Jackson is still sold on the format. "The thing with saxophones is that there are so many possibilities. It almost seems that, if you have the right guys, anything works. You just let the music lead you into the direction, which I hope has led to some sort of style that we have, a style that's unique." —J.W.

that. I'm connecting with young kids. Ten years ago, that wasn't happening. They're all clean-cut and serious.

"I feel that water seeks its own level. Those that are in it, that were meant to be part of the fraternity, will be part of it. Those who are just flash in the pan, they'll flash. Many are called, few are chosen." **DB**

## HORIZON AND 29TH ST. EQUIPMENT

Bobby Watson plays a custom Yamaha alto, a Selmer Mark VI soprano, with Vandoren A-35 and S-35 medium-open mouthpieces and Java Vandoren 3½ reeds. Victor Lewis relies on Premier drums with an 18-inch bass drum, 12-inch rack tom, 14-inch floor tom, and 7½-inch snare. Cymbalwise, he plays three A. Zildjian cymbals—a 22-inch ride, an 18-inch new K crash, and a AA Zildjian "sizzle" crash ride; he uses two bottom New Beat high-hat cymbals (by Zildjian). For sticks, he handles Vic Firth 5Bs.

On the job, Edward Simon is subject to the house piano; at home, Simon plays on a Steinway Professional Model upright. Electronically, he plays a Roland D-50 through a rack including the Yamaha TX 802 synth module and a Quadraverb effects unit. Trumpeter Terrell Stafford plays a Bach Stradivarius medium—large bore, with a 72 bell, and a Bach 1½ B mouthpiece. Bassist Essiet Okun Essiet plays a Tirolian flat-back bass with Tomastik strings. He also uses a Polytone amp with Polytone bass pickup and a Roberto Rodriguez preamp.

In the 29th Street Saxophone Quartet, Ed Jackson, like Watson, plays a custom Yamaha alto, Vandoren mouthpieces, and #3 reeds. Rich Rothenberg plays a Selmer tenor, with Otto Link metal mouthpiece and Vandoren reeds, and Jim Hartog honks with a Selmer baritone, with Peter Ponzel metal mouthpiece and Vandoren reeds.

## HORIZON AND 29TH ST. DISCOGRAPHY

### Horizon

POST-MOTOWN BOP—Blue Note 95148  
THE INVENTOR—Blue Note 91915  
NO QUESTION ABOUT IT—Blue Note 90262

### 29th Street Saxophone Quartet

UNDERGROUND—Antilles 422-848 415  
LIVE—Red 223  
THE REAL DEAL—New Note 1006  
WATCH YOUR STEP—New Note 1002  
POINTILLISTIC GROOVE—Osmosis 6002

### Watson and Lewis

NAIMA'S LOVE SONG—DIW-823  
(w/John Hicks, Curtis Lundy)

(For comprehensive listings, see Bobby Watson story, **DB** May '90, and Victor Lewis story, **DB** Jan. '91.)





MITCHELL SEIDEL

# MIAMI NICE

By Juan Carlos Coto

Arturo Sandoval is a jazz trumpeter, but he's also a Cuban trumpeter. Those are different categories—and two distinct sounds.

On the one hand, the conservatory-trained Sandoval—who defected from Cuba last July and released his first U.S. solo album, the aptly-titled *Flight To Freedom*, last March—can bounce through a funky bop tune, bowing to the man he calls his “spiritual father,” Dizzy Gillespie. Sandoval can also work magic with a flugelhorn, romancing us with a samba-based number. And he can pierce high registers with the style and finesse others lack.

But Sandoval's sound also resurrects the ghosts of Cuba's trumpet greats. They defined the island's brash, emotive style playing in the *conjuntos* that popularized Cuba's homegrown music, *son*, in the '20s and '30s. Sandoval, 40, also echoes the sounds of the players he grew up enjoying: his greatest influence, private teacher, and former first-trumpet for the Havana Symphony, the late Luis Escalante; Havana bandleader Felix Chappotin; and the Cuban trumpeter best known to U.S. audiences, Alfredo “Chocolate” Armenteros.



The classic Cuban trumpet has "a macho sound. It's a man's sound," Sandoval says. "Harry James played that way, too. It seems like today's musicians have too much confidence in the microphone. And with the emphasis on high notes and all that stuff, they've lost that sound."

Sandoval's many musical facets are evident on *Flight* (see "Reviews" p. 32). The eclectic recording represents one of many new achievements for the jazzman, who now lives in Miami with wife Marianela and his 14-year-old son Arturin. His exile from 270 of the world's few remaining communist bastions accelerated what had already been a stellar career.

Barely two months after he arrived in the States, Sandoval met GRP honcho Dave Grusin and played on the pianist/composer's soundtrack for Robert Redford's film *Havana*. (Sandoval's trumpet was more interesting than anything in the film.) Soon after, Sandoval recorded with Paquito D'Rivera on the exiled saxophonist's most recent album, *Reunion*. Sandoval also provided some white-hot solos on Gloria Estefan's latest recording, *Into The Light*.

Sandoval founded the group in 1973 with D'Rivera and Chucho Valdes, the pianist who remains the band's leader on the island.

Since defecting, Sandoval's touring schedule has shown no signs of waning. It has taken him from Latin-meets-jazz jams with Tito Puente at the Village Gate or Chico O'Farrill at Carnegie Hall, to classical-music appearances in concert halls in Germany and Great Britain.

**S**andoval pulls off a Miami expressway in his Mazda minivan, heading into the heart of this bustling exile Mecca for a midday recording session. He's recalling a turning point in his career, when he was tooling around Havana with a different passenger—an *Americano* jazz legend. It was 1977, and Dizzy Gillespie was touring the Caribbean playing impromptu gigs with saxmeister Stan Getz. An unabashed young Cuban appeared at the port.

"I went there to the boat to find him,"

the same streets that produced Luciano "Chano" Pozo, the late Cuban conga man who helped set the foundations for Afro-Cuban jazz in 1947, when he and Gillespie wrote and recorded the seminal hits "Manteca" and "Tin Tin Deo."

It wasn't until later that night, at Havana's Teatro Mella, that Gillespie discovered Sandoval. The young man from Artemisa, a country town in Cuba's musically-rich Pinar del Rio province, took the stage with the godfather of bebop. "He didn't expect it from me—much less from the guy who had been his chauffeur," Sandoval says.

Their friendship remains strong today. Sandoval was touring with Gillespie's United Nation Orchestra in Rome when he rushed to the American embassy and requested political asylum.

The love affair between U.S. jazz and Afro-Cuban sounds continues to deepen, too, Sandoval says. Cubans relish U.S. jazz harmonies, and American musicians learn to discard traditional 1-2-3-4 jazz lines and play around the *clave*, Cuban music's rhythmic heartbeat. The pattern, which usually goes 1-2-3, 1-2 (or sometimes 1-2,



Sandoval and fellow trumpeter Mario Bauzá, the Dean of Afro-Cuban Jazz. "Dizzy calls him father," said Sandoval, "and I call him grandfather."

"It was an incredible thing," says Emilio Estefan, Gloria's husband, manager, and a producer on *Into The Light*. "We played the songs for him once, then we just turned on the tape machine and let him play."

In Cuba, Sandoval had become one of the island's premier cashmakers, playing gigs for the state and earning a food and living stipend. By the time he formed his first solo group in 1981, he was already a bankable draw as part of the groundbreaking Cuban jazz outfit Irakere.

Sandoval says. "I've never had a complex about meeting famous people. If I respect somebody, I go there and try to meet them."

And so, when Gillespie announced he wanted to visit the black neighborhoods where Cuban *congueros* play *guaguancó* and *rumba* in the street, Sandoval offered himself and a cramped Opel automobile. "I didn't even tell him my name," Sandoval says, remembering the drive through Havana neighborhoods. They were some of

1-2-3), has been adapted and popularized over decades. (In rock & roll it's known as the "Bo Diddley Beat," though he certainly wasn't the first to play it.)

"Cuban music has been a lot more visible in recent years, especially in percussion," Sandoval says. "But lately, the influence of Cuban music has been more prominent in pop. In jazz it has been around for a long time. You can barely have a pop group today without that Cuban percussion. A few years ago it wasn't like





that. But that fusion has grown. It's very interesting. It's a mix of two cultures, of two musics that have been able to influence whole generations of musicians internationally."

Sandoval says he's no longer amazed at the reach of his native sounds, not since the '70s, when he and Irakere were greeted in Japan by an all-Japanese salsa band, the Tokyo Cuban Boys. And there was that time in Helsinki, when a young Finnish septet—modeled after standard Cuban *septetos*—played a mean *son* for Sandoval.

One of Sandoval's first moves in Miami was to form a backup group of local musicians. He found them through an old friend, Rene Luis Toledo, a guitarist and session player for Spanish-language singers. Toledo composed two cuts on *Flight*, and plays on all the tunes.

The guitarist tracked down two other transplanted Cubans for the rhythm section, Orlando Hernandez on drums and Oscar Salas on percussion, then rounded out the band with the Orta brothers—Mike on keyboards and Nicky on bass, two University of Miami-schooled musicians of Cuban and Greek parentage.

"I like to work with the same people and have a repertoire," Sandoval says. "I don't like to play with them now and then, inventing things randomly. I like to work with musicians who can create a wide range of sounds and who like to play a lot of different things."

Sandoval's decision to set up shop in Miami might seem offbeat to some—D'Rivera and Cuban conga man Daniel Ponce, for example, work out of the Big Apple—but the trumpeter says south Florida is a vital connection to his past, and a much-needed respite from the road. "It's a shame there's not more movement here in Miami, more venues to play," he says. "But I like living here, and when I come home I also don't like to be working. I like to be at home with my family, relaxed. I'm a homebody."

He also needs to be near the culture and the food—what Cubans call *El Cubaneo*. "I can't live far from my people," Sandoval says. "I couldn't live in Alaska or Switzerland."

It's also obvious Sandoval couldn't be far from the sounds, as he leans back in the Miami recording studio and runs through a playful Cuban riff. He's recording an introduction to a song by exiled Cuban singer Marisela Verena.

After the 15-minute session—he's finished in about four takes—the American owner of the studio brings out the Cuban

coffee and passes it around near the mixing board.

Only in Miami.

As Sandoval fights lunchtime traffic on his way to his new Miami house, the conversation turns from music to another love—freedom.

Back in Cuba, when the record company officials weren't reviewing his choice of songs, the members of *El Comité*, the locally-operated Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, reported anything they deemed suspicious. State security shadowed him on tour, too, often disguised as managers or roadies.

"They control your life. That's the worst part of it," Sandoval says. "You have to tell them everything. What you did and what you're going to do. Then they tell you what you can do—with whom, how, and when."

Still, Sandoval says, waxing philosophical, "Human beings are the same everywhere. There are good, bad, and regular human beings everywhere, in all social classes and all professions. In every country, too. Not everybody here is good. There are sons of bitches here, too. There's everything."

Living conditions have only worsened in Cuba. Sandoval's defection was followed by flights of other disgruntled musicians and painters, among them Rene Lorente, flutist for Havana's legendary king of *música típica* (typical music), the Orquesta Aragon. And more and more, Cubans have been risking their lives on homemade rafts, navigating the 90-mile stretch between Cuba and Key West.

Cuba's plight "is very complicated," Sandoval says. "The country is on a kind of dead-end alley. But you never lose hope. That's what I want more than anything in my life, is that the problem be resolved, that the people become free and be allowed to do as they wish. That's my top ambition in the world—that Cuba be free." DB

### ARTURO SANDOVAL'S EQUIPMENT

Arturo Sandoval plays a Shilke Model B1 trumpet, a Shilke PS-4 Piccolo trumpet, and a Zigmant Kanstul flugelhorn. All his mouthpieces are Black and Hill 3C. His microphone is an Electro-Voice PL-20.

### ARTURO SANDOVAL SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

All of the 13 albums Sandoval recorded in Cuba are on the state-run EGREM label and rarely available in the U.S. Those records are not listed here, but can be ordered from the Center for Cuban Studies, 124 W. 23rd St., N.Y.C. 10011.

#### as a leader

*FLIGHT TO FREEDOM*—GRP GRD-9634

*TUMBAITO*—Messidor 15974

*BREAKING THE SOUND BARRIER*—Chicago Caribbean Arts 8301

*JUST MUSIC*—Jazz House JHR007

*STRAIGHT AHEAD*—Jazz House JHR008

#### with Dizzy Gillespie

*TO A FINLAND STATION*—Pablo 2310-889

*LIVE AT THE ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL*—Enja R2 79658

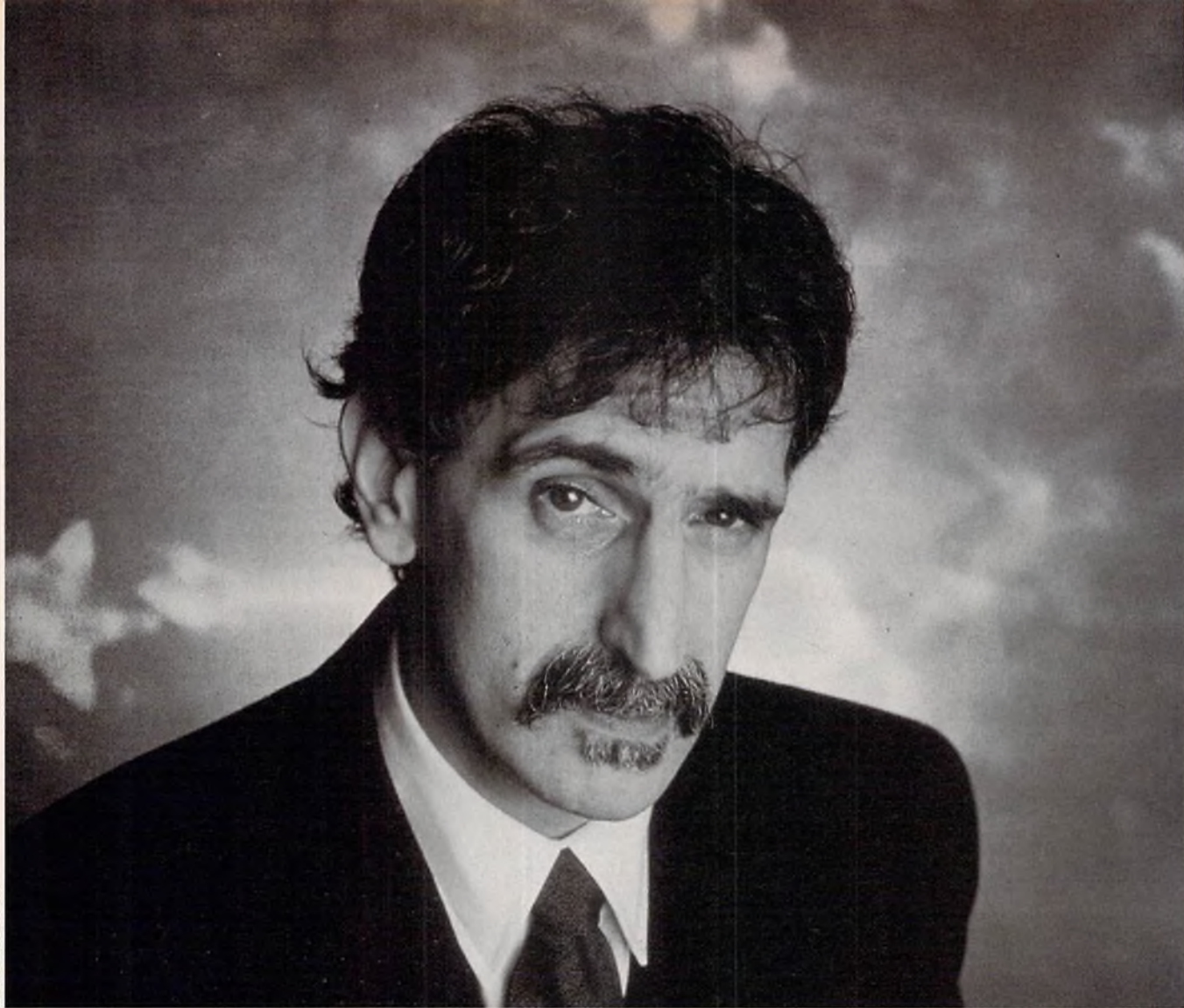
#### as a sideman

*REUNION*—Messidor 15805 (w/Paquito D'Rivera)

*INTO THE LIGHT*—Epic EK46988 (w/Gloria Estefan)

*HAVANA* (movie soundtrack)—GRP 2003 (w/Dave Grusin)





**F**rank Zappa is both proud and pissed-off. His 1988 road band has been history for more than three years now but he's been reliving the triumphs and frustrations of that band ever since. First, it was over a year at the mixing board, extracting, compiling, and combining the best material into three albums: *Broadway The Hard Way*, *The Best Band You Never Heard In Your Life*, and the new *Make A Jazz Noise Here*, as well as bits and pieces in the ongoing *You Can't Do That On Stage Anymore* series, which fuses performances from Frank's entire career. Since the band—which included drummer Chad Wackerman, bassist Scott Thunes, percussionist Ed Mann, keyboardist Bobby Martin, guitarist/vocalists Ike Willis and Mike Keneally, trumpeter Walt Fowler, trombonist Bruce Fowler, and reedmen Paul Carman, Albert Wing and Kurt McGettrick, along with Frank on guitar, Synclavier, and vocals—only played in Europe and in the northeast United States, Frank can take pride in the fact that many of its finest moments are finally available to his fans. At the same time, the eyebrows scowl and the shrugs turn a tad painful when he discusses the interpersonal problems that led to the premature breakup of the group, leaving Zappa \$400,000 in the hole and refusing to put another band together unless someone else foots the bill.

"Most of the guys in the band decided they hated the bass player and refused to go on stage with him again," Frank sighs. "I didn't want to fire the bass player; I liked him. It put me in a position where if I had to replace someone, it meant going back into rehearsal, and rehearsals cost money. We had plenty of offers to do concerts in the U.S. that summer but they just wouldn't do it

with Scott."

One of the unique things about this particular ensemble was the five-man horn section. For years, Frank contented himself with synthesized horn sounds, but for this band, he wanted the real thing. Horn arrangements were hammered together in rehearsal but the actual methodology ranged from Kurt McGettrick copying an orchestral score for "Strictly Genteel" to the band learning their parts to "The Untouchables" from a cassette of the TV theme played through the p.a. at a soundcheck. Reedman Paul Carman knew Jimmy Page's guitar solo from Led Zeppelin's immortal "Stairway To Heaven" by heart, so Frank had him teach it to the rest of the horns. Performed over a lively ska rhythm, it's one of *The Best Band . . .*'s most humorous moments.

If the horns are noticeable on *The Best Band . . .*, they're even moreso on *Make A Jazz Noise Here*, where they get to stretch out on instrumental versions of "Let's Make The Water Turn Black" and "Harry, You're A Beast," among other delights.

"There's a piece on there called 'When Yuppies Go To Hell' that's a heartwarming experience," Zappa smiles. "Then there's the arrangement of 'The Royal March From L'Histoire du Soldat' by Stravinsky played faster than anybody has ever tried it before, along with the main theme from the third Bartok piano concerto. The version of 'Big Swifty' is pretty outstanding; in the middle, it features a contrapuntal section where one guy is playing 'Carmen' and the other guy is playing the 'Prelude To Act 3 Of Lohengrin.' They're playing them together over a chromatic bass; it's kinda nice."

Another of the surprises on *The Best Band . . .* is the number of



# FRANK ZAPPA MAKES A JAZZ NOISE

BY MICHAEL DAVIS

tunes using reggae or ska rhythms. But Frank assures me that this is no change.

"No," he shakes his head, "most of the bands I've had since the early 1980's have been doing reggae; it's just that nobody ever wrote about it. There's two things we've done a lot of: reggaes and waltzes. Then sometimes, we've done reggae waltzes. We've done reggae in seven, reggae in 11; we play all kinds of reggae. One thing we were experimenting with on the '88 tour was mariachi rhythm, superimposing mariachi rhythm on top of reggae. We did that in several places."

When congratulated on the reggae-fied version of Ravel's *Bolero*, which features some amazing drum work from Wackerman, he just chuckles, "Well, that's a good example of a reggae waltz."

Zappa has other ongoing projects, as well, in varying stages. A couple of spoken-word projects are now languishing on the back burner; closer to completion is an album called *Lost Episodes*, a compilation of unreleased studio performances dating from 1962 to 1984. The fourth volume of *You Can't Do That On Stage Anymore* should be out as you read this, with two more volumes to go. When I first meet him, however, he's typing into his Synclavier, working on one of five hundred or so new pieces; he promises a follow-up to *Jazz From Hell* by the end of the year. He's made many modifications to his Synclavier since the *Jazz From Hell* sessions which should add more realism to his music.

"I bought a direct-to-disc system, 16 tracks, about an hour per track," he explains. "I've expanded the RAM, expanded the number of voices in the machine. In the real world, instruments don't just shut off after you've played a note; if you don't have enough RAM to hold your samples, then you have to use short samples or looped samples, which sound unrealistic. When you have more RAM space, you can use longer samples and because the ring-off is more natural, the things tend to sound better."

Frank has also been getting more involved with the classical world. September of 1990 saw performances of several Zappa pieces by the Lyon Opera Ballet and the Orchestre de l'Opera de Lyon in Lyon, France. But this pales beside the possibilities of an upcoming project.

"The next thing that we're going to try is that I have an offer from the Frankfurt Festival in Germany for 1992, which, in part, is a celebration of John Cage's 80th birthday. Cage is going to be there; Stockhausen is going to be there; and they want me to be there with some of my music. One of the things I proposed to them is that they put the guys in this chamber ensemble called Ensemble Moderne on a plane to L.A. for two weeks. I will train them, as I would my band, and build the piece for them."

Congratulating him on finding a way to use his bandleading skills within the classical realm, he nods. "It also means that they're

going to wind up with a piece of music written on paper, which they will then be able to play in concert over and over again. It'll be made just for them; it's like cutting them a suit of clothes. Another thing we'll have is a sampling session where I'll make samples of the whole ensemble and then use those samples in the composition, so they get to play against themselves."

Speaking of composition, I had to find out the story behind his notorious tune, "The Eric Dolphy Memorial Barbeque" and how much of it was written.

"Just the head is written," Frank replies; "all the rest of it is conducted. I used to listen to Eric Dolphy albums and I really liked 'em. Most of the people I knew didn't. And then, he was dead. So, it's a memorial barbeque for Eric."

Was there ever the sense that it was given that name because jazz pioneers almost never get things like memorial barbeques named after them?

"That could be part of it," Zappa answers.

And now for the big question: If someone gave such a barbeque and invited you, would you go?

"Depends on who's doing the barbeque," Frank says with a smile. "I don't know; with that many live musicians around, I might go crazy. Somebody should throw one, though. What else happens in summer? You've got the 4th of July and then you've gotta wait till Memorial Day. So you've gotta get something in between there."

DB

## FRANK ZAPPA SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| MAKE A JAZZ NOISE HERE—Barking Pumpkin D2AS 74234                     | SHUT UP 'N PLAY YER GUITAR—Rykodisc 10028/29                  |
| THE BEST BAND YOU NEVER HEARD IN YOUR LIFE—Barking Pumpkin D2AS 74233 | JOE'S GARAGE—Rykodisc RCD 10060/61                            |
| BROADWAY THE HARD WAY—Rykodisc RCD 40096                              | SHEIK YERBOUT!—Rykodisc RCD 40162                             |
| YOU CAN'T DO THAT ON STAGE ANYMORE, VOLUME 1—Rykodisc RCD 10081/82    | BABY SNAKES—Barking Pumpkin 74219 (cassette)                  |
| YOU CAN'T DO THAT ON STAGE ANYMORE, VOLUME 2—Rykodisc RCD 10083/84    | ZOOT ALLURES—Rykodisc RCD 10160                               |
| YOU CAN'T DO THAT ON STAGE ANYMORE, VOLUME 3—Rykodisc RCD 10085/86    | BONGO FURY—Rykodisc RCD 10097                                 |
| YOU CAN'T DO THAT ON STAGE ANYMORE, VOLUME 4—Rykodisc RCD 10087/88    | ONE SIZE FITS ALL—Rykodisc 10095                              |
| JAZZ FROM HELL—Rykodisc RCD 10030                                     | APOSTROPHE/OVERNITE SENSATION—Rykodisc RCD 40025              |
| GUITAR—Rykodisc RCD 10079/80  | THE GRAND WAZOO—Rykodisc RCD 10026                            |
| LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA—Rykodisc RCD 10022                          | WAKA JAWAKA—Rykodisc RCD 10094                                |
| THING-FISH—Rykodisc RCD 10020/21                                      | HOT RATS—Rykodisc RCD 10066                                   |
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|   | UNCLE MEAT—Rykodisc RCD 10064/65                              |
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|   | ABSOLUTELY FREE—Rykodisc RCD 10093                            |
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## FRANK ZAPPA'S EQUIPMENT

"I was trying for a clean sound on the '88 tour. I used my custom-built Stratocaster and a Roland GP-8, plus a direct input, and the Synclavier, of course."



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



## RAY ANDERSON

**WISHBONE**—Gramavision 79454: *THE GAHOOTZE; AH SOCA; DUKE ELLINGTON'S SOUND OF LOVE; COMES LOVE; CAPE HORN; CHEEK TO CHEEK; THE WISHBONE SUITE: WISH FOR THE EARTH—WISH FOR THE FOLKS—WISH FOR THE SPIRITS.* (65:21)

**Personnel:** Anderson, trombone, vocals (cut 4); Fumio Itabashi, piano; Mark Helias, bass; Dion Parson, drums; Don Alias, percussion (2, 5-7); Mark Feldman, violin (5,7).

★★★★

## FRED WESLEY

**NEW FRIENDS**—Antilles 422-848 280-2: *ROCKIN' IN RHYTHM; HONEY LOVE; BRIGHT MISSISSIPPI; LOVE WE HAD STAYS ON MY MIND; FOR THE ELDERS; PLENTY, PLENTY SOUL; BLUE MONK; PEACE FUGUE; EYES SO BEAUTIFUL; BIRKS WORKS; D-CUP AND UP.* (66:31)

**Personnel:** Wesley, trombone, vocal (2), arranger; Stanton Davis, trumpet, flugelhorn; Maceo Parker, alto sax, percussion; Tim Green, tenor, soprano sax, percussion; Geri Allen, keyboards; Anthony Cox, bass; Bill Stewart, drums; Carmen Lundy, vocals (4,9); Steve Turre, Robin Eubanks, trombone (5,8).

★★★★ 1/2

Ray Anderson just keeps getting better. On *Wishbone* he offers up the usual weird timbral gambits: the off-the-wall blats, smears, and split tones, the I-see-a-mouse panicky falsetto, the frayed terminal vibrato. Though outward-bound players get accused of having no sense of history, Anderson (like Lester Bowie, say) tumbled to the big, juicy sounds of pre-bop jazz long before Wynton did. But there's more to Ray, like the beautiful, broad, burnished sound he displays on Mingus' tender Ellington tribute, or the rhythmic dancing worthy of Astaire on "Cheek To Cheek." Ray and the fine violinist Mark Feldman blend to give ominous power to the title suite.

Still, Anderson uses rhythm to infect the whole band with his bizarre sense of humor on "Gahootze"'s stop-time bit, the tango "Cape Horn," and the pan-Caribbean "Soca." Anderson encourages his old chum Helias' own nutty streak, though Itabashi, with his grab-bag of piano styles, makes kookiness sound contrived. New drummer Parson, a real find, wisely keeps them anchored. As singer (the two-beat Billie obscurity "Comes Love"), Anderson's become more relaxed, less inclined to make his voice do all the odd stuff his horn does, at least till the scatting starts. Given the scant competition, he's become one of jazz's best male singers, but it's still a sideline.

The parallels between Fred Wesley's album

and fellow J.B.er Maceo's *Roots Revisited* are obvious. (Stephen Meyner produced, again. Can Pee Wee Ellis' version be far behind?) Like Fred's dusky brass sound and relaxed legato attack, it's eminently likable. You gotta dig a guy who covers '20s Duke and '50s Drifters back to back, who has Geri Allen play funky clavinet on the vulgarly-titled J.B.-ish finale. The album's not perfect: on "Bright Mississippi," Fred neglects composer Monk's advice to keep the melody in mind, playing it as if it were "Georgia Brown," not based on it. (But his drawling wah-wah on "Blue Monk"'s head is just right.) The format is pretty scattershot—Carmen Lundy does a pop-diva turn on "Eyes," Fred croons the Drifters' "Honey Love"—but it works on the whole. Wesley won't cut Ray Anderson, singing or playing, but he does have solid jazz credentials—he spent most of '78 with Basie—and these old and new friends have big fun. (reviewed on CD)

—Kevin Whitehead



## WYNTON MARSALIS

**STANDARD TIME VOL. 2: INTIMACY CALLING**—Columbia CK 47346: *WHEN IT'S SLEEPY-TIME DOWN SOUTH; YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT LOVE IS; INDELIBLE AND NOCTURNAL; I'LL REMEMBER APRIL; EMBRACEABLE YOU; CREPUSCULE WITH NELLIE; WHAT IS THIS THING CALLED LOVE?; THE END OF A LOVE AFFAIR; EAST OF THE SUN (WEST OF THE MOON); LOVER; YESTERDAY; BOURBON STREET PARADE.* (70:11)

**Personnel:** Marsalis, trumpet; Marcus Roberts, piano (cuts 1-6, 8-11); Reginald Veal (1-6, 8-12), Robert Hurst (7), bass; Herlin Riley (1-6, 8-12), Jeff Watts (7), drums; Todd Williams, tenor sax (4); Wes Anderson, alto sax (6).

★★★★

Despite the misleading title, *Intimacy Calling* is the third in Wynton Marsalis' series of standards. His father, Ellis, joined him on piano for Vol. 3, released in 1990. On Vol. 2, he's back with his regular pianist, Marcus Roberts.

If you were waiting for a change in direction from Wynton, have a seat. His playing continues to gain assurance, but it still has a second-hand quality, as if he were the character Christian in the movie *Cyrano de Bergerac*, wooing Roxanne with lines cued by Cyrano. On "When It's Sleepytime Down South," where Wynton doesn't try too hard to impress, his sauntering suits the tune just fine. But "Embraceable You" is one long swagger, with runs that dazzle but don't mean much.

Still, there's plenty to like about this recording, most of all the smooth collaboration be-

tween these players. Roberts is a good influence. On "You Don't Know What Love Is" his subdued chords with their occasional rippling flourishes set just the right delicate background to make Wynton's lines sound pensive.

The talent is for real: These players (with Eric Reed instead of Roberts) sounded every bit as tight and polished in a recent live date as they do here. But there are few surprises that made me want to turn to someone and say, "Wow, did you hear that?" The four stars are for maintaining tradition so well; the fifth would have been for upsetting it a bit. (reviewed on CD)

—Elaine Guregian



## GONZALO RUBALCABA

**DISCOVERY**—Blue Note CDP 7 95478 2: *WELL YOU NEEDN'T; VELAS; PROLOGO COMIENZO; FIRST SONG; ONCE AROUND THE PARK; JOAO; ALL THE THINGS YOU ARE.* (54:08)

**Personnel:** Rubalcaba, piano; Charlie Haden, bass; Paul Motian, drums.

★★★★

## YOSUKE YAMASHITA

**SAKURA**—Antilles 422-849 141-2: *SAKURA; YURIKAGO; HAIKU; AMEFURI; ANO MACHI; DOBARADA; SASA NO HA; SUNAYAMA; TSUKI NO SABAKU; USAGI NO DANCE; NENKORORI.* (61:49)

**Personnel:** Yamashita, piano; Cecil McBee, bass; Pheeroan akLaff, drums.

★★★★

With these albums, two immensely talented pianists, Cuban Gonzalo Rubalcaba and Yosuke Yamashita of Japan, make their overdue bid for recognition in the States. It's a victory for Rubalcaba even to be heard up Peoria way: his lawyers apparently sidestepped Uncle Sam's just-say-no-to-Fidel trade policy by having Blue Note license *Discovery*, his 1990 Montreux Jazz Festival trio performance, from their Japanese affiliate label. Yamashita's *Sakura*, a New York session with two local aces, is also a breakthrough: after years of stardom in the savvy-to-jazz archipelago and acclaim all over Europe, one of his 40-odd recordings has been released here.

Rubalcaba, a 28-year-old virtuoso probably best known for his fusion group *Projecto*, grabs one by the lapels at the album's start with Monk's knotty "Well You Needn't." Whether hammering the keys or conceiving comparative gentleness, he goes about his improvisatory business with extreme confidence, a deep



sense of purpose, and Latino passion. Even the most tempestuous solos, directed by bop, salsa, or free impulses, have an exacting logic and construction. "Joao," an original composition, most certainly hushed the Montreux audience into a mesmerized state, the feeling of mystery pervading his graceful, disciplined phrases. With support from the exemplary rhythm team of Charlie Haden and Paul Motian, the Amadeo Roldan Conservatory-trained pianist has his unbilled recital light up the Swiss night.

As with Rubalcaba, the middle-aged Yamashita knows the principles of jazz piano inside out, and knows to use amazing technique in the service of a catholic, cogent point of view. He rivals the *Habana* native for effortless drive, fecund imagination, and sensitivity. On a program of Nipponese traditional and folk songs, Yamashita paraphrases and invents melodies with strong, sure fingers that work out complicated yet accessible ideas. His playing on "Haiku" is at once lucid and abstract, intense and troubling. "Sunayama" is part heartbreak, part meditation, part turbulence. "Sasa No Ha" has the ceremonial wit of a Kabuki dancer. Pheeroan akLaff and Cecil McBee, with whom Yamashita plays New York's Sweet Basil every year (since '88) and has recorded with twice previously, accent his artful panache and offer their own serendipitous discoveries. (reviewed on CD)

—Frank-John Hadley



## DIZZY GILLESPIE

**LIVE AT THE ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL**—Enja R2 79658: *TIN TIN DEO; SERESTA/SAMBA FOR CARMEN; AND THEN SHE STOPPED; TANGA; KUSH; DIZZY SHELLS; A NIGHT IN TUNISIA.* (74:42)

**Personnel:** Gillespie, trumpet; Arturo Sandoval, trumpet, piccolo trumpet, flugelhorn; Claudio Roditi, trumpet; Paquito D'Rivera, alto sax, clarinet; James Moody, alto, tenor sax, flute; Mario Rivera, tenor, soprano sax, percussion; Slide Hampton, trombone; Steve Turre, bass trombone, conch shells; Danilo Perez, piano; John Lee, bass; Ignacio Berroa, drums; Giovanni "Manenguito" Hidalgo, congas, percussion; Airta Moreira, percussion; Flora Purim, vocals.

★ ★ ★ ★

## ARTURO SANDOVAL

**FLIGHT TO FREEDOM**—GRP GRD-9634: *FLIGHT TO FREEDOM; LAST TIME I SAW YOU; CARIBEÑO; SAMBA DE AMORE; PSALM; RENE'S SONG; BODY AND SOUL; TANGA; CAPRICHOSOS DE LA HABANA; MARIANELA.* (57:13)

**Personnel:** Sandoval, trumpet, flugelhorn, synthesizer, percussion, vocals; Ed Calle, tenor sax, flute, EWI, background vocals; Long John, percussion; Chick Corea, piano (cuts 1, 2, 5); Dave Weckl, drums (1, 2, 5, 7, 8, 10); Anthony Jackson, bass (1, 2, 5); Mike Orta, piano, synthesizer (3, 4, 6-9); Nicky Orta, bass, background vocals (3, 4, 6-10); Rene Luis Toledo, guitar, background vocals (3, 4, 6-9); Orlando Hernandez, drums, background vocals (3, 4, 6, 9); Portinho, percussion (9); Danilo Perez, synthesizer (1); Richard Eddy, synthesizer (2); Julia Fuller, Pete King, Joel Dorn, background vocals (9); Gene Orloff, Sanford Allen, Max Ellen, John Pintavalle, Matthew Raimondi, Elliot Rosoff, Harry Zaratzian, Jesse Levy, Eugene Moye, Alfred Brown, strings (4, 7, 10).

★ ★ ★ ½

## PAQUITO D'RIVERA/ ARTURO SANDOVAL

**REUNION**—Messidor 15805-2: *PROLOGO; MAMBO INFLUENCIADO; REUNION; TANGA; CLAUDIA; FRIDAY MORNING; LATIN AMERICAN SUITE; BODY & SOUL; CAPRICHOSOS DE LA HABANA; EPILOGO; MAMBO INFLUENCIADO.* (42:42)

**Personnel:** D'Rivera, alto sax, clarinet; Sandoval, trumpet, flugelhorn; Fareed Haque, guitar; Danilo Perez, piano; David Finck, bass; Mark Walker, drums; Giovanni Hidalgo, percussion.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

Besides pioneering bebop, Dizzy Gillespie helped launch Afro-Cuban jazz, and he's maintained the Latin connection ever since. His latest album captures a London performance by his 15-piece United Nation Orchestra, which includes American, Brazilian, Panamanian, Dominican, Puerto Rican, and Cuban musicians, among them his latest protégé, Arturo Sandoval. The Cuban trumpet star (whose cause Gillespie championed long before his recent defection) is also making his own U.S. album debut, with heavyweight assistance from a number of his new label-mates. But when he joins Paquito D'Rivera on a German session, the two émigrés play strictly from the heart.

A Pan-American big band might be another musician's impossible dream, but for Gillespie, who barnstorms the globe to perform for presidents and kings, it's almost a practical necessity. Though he can well afford to rest on his laurels, Diz can still play when he wants to, and with Sandoval's and Claudio Roditi's trumpets egging him on, he swoops and flutters with quirky grace and sassy humor on *Live At The Royal Festival Hall*. Every band member gets to solo over the sprawling course of the concert, with whole numbers built around Flora Purim's samba scatting and Steve Turre's conch-shell blowing, while airy, percussive arrangements keep the show afloat. James Moody, Slide Hampton, and Paquito D'Rivera play notable roles, but the hair-raising, three-way trumpet duel that climaxes the 18-minute closing rendition of "A Night In Tunisia" over-

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"The tenor saxophone just doesn't get anymore romantic, more sublime than this." LOS ANGELES TIMES



shadows everything else.

Sandoval's *Flight To Freedom* has a similar Latin-bop feel (no surprise, given Arturo's acknowledged debt to Diz), only much slicker and not nearly as relaxed. With his plush, lustrous tone—plus speed, range, and power to burn—Sandoval flaunts the most acrobatic trumpet technique since Maynard Ferguson's, but his supersonic, stratospheric solos often seem nervous and rushed. Although Chick Corea, Dave Weckl, and Anthony Jackson lend a hand on several tracks, former Miami Sound Machine saxophonist Ed Calle is more impres-

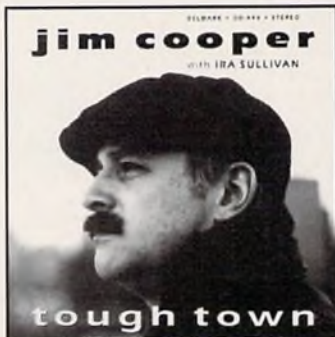
sive, dogging the trumpeter note-for-note through the most convoluted runs. Isolated from the jazz scene for most of his career, Sandoval shows more polish than personality. A little stateside seasoning will surely smooth the rough edges of his glitzy style.

Arturo seems much more comfortable and unself-conscious playing in Paquito's shadow on *Reunion* (Messidor Music GmbH, Kleine Bockenheimer Strasse 10-12, D-6000 Frankfurt Am Main 1, Germany), which showcases a number of compositions by Irakere founder Chucho Valdés. As nominal leader, D'Rivera

gets most of the solo space, flaunting his fluid, flute-like clarinet and lilting, Cuban-accented bebop alto, while Sandoval simmers sweet harmonies on flugelhorn or sizzles amazingly dextrous bop lines on muted trumpet. Panamanian pianist Danilo Perez and Chilean guitarist Fareed Haque effortlessly juggle classical, jazz, and Latin riffs, and the rhythm section, featuring Puerto Rican percussion prodigy Giovanni Hidalgo, keeps a steely grip on the grooves. Though the musicians plow familiar turf, their telepathic empathy yields more than just the sum of their dazzling chops. (reviewed on CD)  
—Larry Birnbaum

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## CAPTAIN BEEFHEART

**THE SPOTLIGHT KID/CLEAR SPOT**—Reprise 26249: *I'M GONNA BOOGLARIZE YOU BABY*; *WHITE JAM*; *BLABBER 'N SMOKE*; *WHEN IT BLOWS IT STACKS*; *ALICE IN BLUNDERLAND*; *THE SPOTLIGHT KID*; *CLICK CLACK*; *GROW FINS*; *THERE AIN'T NO SANTA CLAUS ON THE EVENIN' STAGE*; *GLIDER*; *LOW YO YO STUFF*; *NOWADAYS A WOMAN'S GOTTA HIT A MAN*; *TOO MUCH TIME*; *CIRCUMSTANCES*; *MY HEAD IS MY ONLY HOUSE UNLESS IT RAINS*; *SUN ZOOM SPARK*; *CLEAR SPOT*; *CRAZY LITTLE THING*; *LONG NECK BOTTLES*; *HER EYES ARE A BLUE MILLION MILES*; *BIG EYED BEANS FROM VENUS*; *GOLDEN BIRDIES*. (73:16)

**Personnel:** Beefheart (Don Van Vliet), vocals, harmonica, jingle bells (cut 9), wings (22); Zoot Horn Rollo, electric and slide guitars; Ed Marimba, marimba, percussion, piano, drums; Ted Cactus, Drumbo, Rhys Clark, drums (various cuts 1-11); Rockette Morton, electric bass (1-11, 22), rhythm guitar (12-21); Orejon, electric bass (12-21); Winged Eel Fingerling (1-11), Russ Titelman (13), electric guitar; the Blackberries, vocals (13, 18); Van Vliet, Ted Templeman (12, 19), Jerry Jumonville (13), horn arrangements.

★★★★★

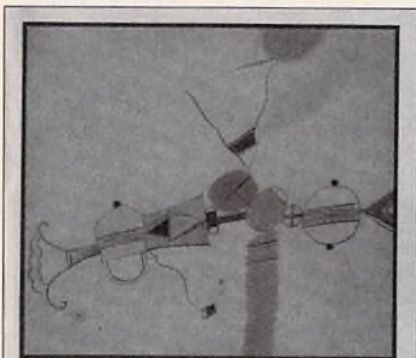
These albums should have been Beefheart's breakouts when they were released in '72; is America ready yet? After issuing two avant-rock milestones—the crunching, polyrhythmic *Trout Mask Replica* and similar but tighter *Lick My Decals Off Baby* (now on CDs from Reprise and Enigma, respectively)—he came back with his two most accessible records: *Spotlight Kid*, his definitive blues statement, and *Clear Spot*, Beef for the dance floor.

Beefheart's always sounded forbidding: no artist makes a weirder first impression, with his dark, low, Howlin' Wolf growl and dull-razor falsetto, with his Magic Band's nervous, gaggle of slide and fretting guitars, with rhythm sections whose grooves change so often they don't work like grooves at all. (Their frenetic



hat

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PERFORMANCE (QUARTET) 1979

Performance (Quartet)

1979 (hat ART CD 6044; 71:13: ★★★★★) and *Eight (+3) Tristano Compositions 1989* (hat ART CD 6052; 74:56: ★★★★★) serve the same function for, respectively, Braxton's quartet music and his work "in the tradition." *Performance* is a concert excursion through some of Braxton's most robust, witty, and colorful compositions from the '70s. The exuberant virtuosity and humor of trombonist Ray Anderson, the pyrotechnics of percussionist Thurman Barker, and the fluent bass of John Lindberg spurred Braxton on at every turn, resulting in a case-in-point for concert recordings.

In a word, the *Tristano* set, a tribute to Warne Marsh, is hot. Tristano's compositions are particularly fitting vehicles for Braxton, as their serpentine lines are akin to Braxton's more rococo quartet pieces. But, Braxton transforms these compositions with a palatable emotionalism and a rousing rhythmic drive. His cohorts are equally inspired: Rova's baronist John Raskin revels in the idiom, pianist Dred Scott's extraordinary debut is marked by quicksilver solos and two-fisted comping, and Cecil McBee and Andrew Cyrille are their typically masterful selves. This is the best of Braxton's jazz repertoire recordings.

Bill Shoemaker

NOVEMBER 1990 DOWN BEAT  
(reprint by permission of down beat magazine)

ANTHONY BRAXTON

\*

*Eight (+3) Tristano Compositions 1989*

hat ART CD6052 CD

*Two Not One*; 317 E 32nd Street; *Dreams*; *Lennie's Pennies*; *How Deep Is The Ocean*; *Victory Ball* (2 takes); *Sax Of A Kind*; *Lennie Bird*; *Time On My Hands*; *Baby*; *April*.

Anthony Braxton (as, sax, f); John Haskin (bs); Dred Scott (p); Cecil McBee (b); Andrew Cyrille (d). Rec: 10 & 11 December 1989.

THE (+3) refers to the two show-tunes, "Time On My Hands" and "How Deep Is The Ocean", together with Warne Marsh's

hat

- expect the unexpected

"Marshmallow" (the album is dedicated to Marsh). Their inclusion has logic, because Tristano's compositions, apart from the occasional free exploration, tended to be based on standard chord sequences - you don't have to look too far for the genesis of "April" or "Lennie's Pennies". Yet for all of their prior harmonic sources they did - and still do - live a life of their own in the intricate semi-quavers with which Tristano topped them up.

So this homage isn't a question of ransacking somebody else's back catalogue with an eye on easy money. Well, you wouldn't expect it to be, would you? For a start, Braxton's credentials as a creator and thinker - let alone as a performer - are as high as you'll get: and then, you'd have to be a bit damaged in the head to think there's any



commercial gain in Lennie Tristano's music and thought-processes. Even now, years on, there's still a diamond hardness about his work, an uncompromising clarity that requires full attention.

To this Braxton has added not simply another layer of intellectuality, but what seems to be a kind of playfulness, which first understands, then enjoys, the complexity of this music. He's assumed that life has moved on in these re-interpretations, so you know where they're coming from but not necessarily where they're going to go, because of the breadth of subsequent experience brought to bear. In this way Scott is more Bill Evans than Tristano, whilst Cyrille has abandoned the freeway fury that he adopted with Cecil Taylor to play time, and yet Harold Granowsky he definitely isn't. Braxton himself

hat

- expect the unexpected

seems to be in a trance of delight, working out of Konitz towards far wilder shores, fuelled by a charge of ideas that only a consummate technique can order. The baritone saxophone was never an instrument that figured in Tristano's soundscape (well, neither did the flute or soprano, actually) but its introduction here is a mark of genius. Raskin has the technique, with a beautifully full, Chaloffian sound, and this seems to have kept in check - just - the idea that he's Leo Parker born again. Truly, his entry into his solo on "April" can seem worth the price of the disc by itself.

We all of us can think - if we work at it - and some of us play instruments. But those who can reorganise the work of a great artist into a new and delightful source of artistry are rare indeed. This is what has happened here (just as John Zorn did on *News For Lulu*\*) and it really should be required listening for anyone who takes jazz seriously. Give yourself an early Christmas present.

JACK COOKE

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\*



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NEWS FOR LULU

hat ART  
CD 6005

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order paved the way for Ornette's Prime Time.) Pre-punk, pre-world music, post-Cage, his carefully mapped-out pieces suggest the chaos of the world heard as a neatly-orchestrated percussion choir.

The albums paired here (*un-remixed*, happily) traffic in his usual splintery timbres, but the grooves are easier to spot. *Kid* boogies like John Lee Hooker. It's Beef's roots album: in this frankly bluesy context, the frantic bottleneck guitars and his gravel pipes and moaning mouth harp sound almost familiar. As a lyricist, Beefheart's more of a poet than any 50 guitar-strumming wimps. These songs are so good you wonder why blues bands don't cover them—like the onomatopoeic train song "Click Clack," or the title track, hung on an irresistible major-minor line for bass and marimba (an instrument he uses a lot, its warm, woody tone countering the band's abrasiveness).

*Clear Spot* was more frankly commercial. Soul singers and r&b horns flavor a couple of tracks which ought've been smash hits; but even there, his weirdness pops through—like on "Too Much Time"'s musically fiendish bridge, where he rhymes "old stale beans" and "can of sardines." Beefheart's best music is bracingly dissonant, but it's funny, too. He's a visionary with an eye and ear like nobody else's, and if you don't know his music, now's the time. It may shock you on first listen, but that's part of its charm. (reviewed on CD)

—Kevin Whitehead



## DAVID FRIESEN

**DEPARTURE**—Global Pacific R2 79338: *DANCING; NEW TUNE BLUES; MADONNA; MARTIN'S BALCONY; FAR AND AWAY; SITKA IN THE WOODS; EARLY MORNING LIGHT; INTRO; LONG TRIP HOME; HOUSE OF THE RISING SUN; DEPARTURE.* (44:52)

**Personnel:** Friesen, Oregon bass, percussion, shakuhachi; Uwe Kropinski, acoustic nylon, steel-string guitars, percussion; Airtio Moreira, percussion; Flora Purim, vocals (cuts 4, 9).

★ ★ ★

David Friesen refuses to be constrained by the traditional role of the acoustic bass as a rhythm instrument. He's always soloing or playing a melody, and his tunes sound like they've been composed for (and on) the bass. You won't hear many conventional basslines on *Departure*, an acoustic date centered on duets

between Friesen and guitarist Uwe Kropinski. The compact and portable custom Oregon bass violin gives Friesen a rich voice full of vibrato, at times sounding remarkably like an electric bass or a second guitar.

Kropinski, an East German emigré, sounds like he's played with Friesen for years. Both musicians prefer knotty, intricate phrasings, and they trade off on leading and supporting roles. Kropinski is capable of the odd chords and delicacy you might associate with Ralph Towner, but when he gets worked up, as on "Sitka In The Woods" or the flamencoid samba "Early Morning Light," you can hear energy and bluesy grit reminiscent of John McLaughlin. When he's not playing the strings, he raps and drums the body of his instrument. Airtio plays an important role in this unit, driving the rhythms forward, and also liberating Friesen to explore melodies, as on "Far And Away," which the percussionist picks up and carries.

The heart of *Departure* is the anticipation and interplay between Friesen and Kropinski. This low-key date emphasizes playing more than composition. There's a bigger payoff for the attentive listener than for the casual drop-in. It's as though you're eavesdropping on a private conversation which occasionally turns to quantum physics. *Departure* takes you to an interesting place, though you may not remember many of the details once you return. (reviewed on CD)

—Jon Andrews

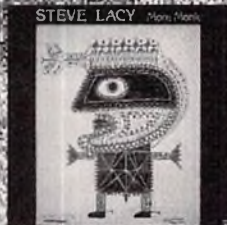
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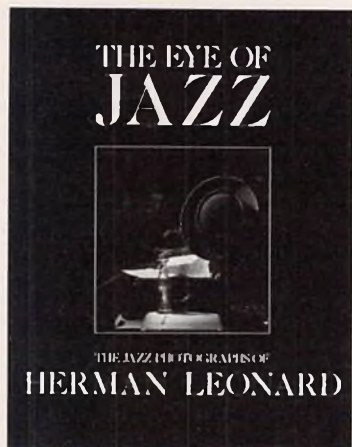
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**Personnel:** Nascimento, guitar, vocals; Tulio Mourao, keyboards; Joao Baptista, bass; Jurim Moreira, Robertinho Silva, Ronaldo Silva, Vanderlei Silva, Mingo, Ricardo Leao, drums, percussion; Heitor T. P., guitar; Nivaldo Ornellas, sax; Mazzola, rhythmic concepts; Wagner Tiso, orchestration and conducting; the 'Waiapi Indians; the Kayapo people.

★ ★ ★ ½

## IVAN LINS

**AWA YIO**—Reprise 26499-2: AWA YIO; CLA-REOU—IT BRIGHTENED; QUE QUER DE MIM—WHAT DO YOU WANT OF ME; TURMALINA—TURMALINE; MEU PAIS—MY COUNTRY; CRU-CRE CORRORO—BRAND NEW SAMBA; AMERICA, BRASIL; AI AI AI AI; PONTOS CARDEIAS—FOUR CORNERS; AGUA DOCE (I LOVE YOU)—SPRING WATER; LEVA E TRAZ (ELIS)—GIVE AND TAKE. (52:21)

**Personnel:** Lins, vocals, keyboards; Heitor T.P., guitar; Larry Williams, keyboards; Tony Levin, bass; Vinnie Colaiuta, drums; Hugh Masekela, trumpet (cut 2); Fernando Pirulito, Armando Marcal, Lennie Castro, percussion; Gracinha Loporace, Kevyn Lettau, Carol Rogers, background vocals.

★ ★ ★ ★

In the last few years, eyes and ears have been increasingly turned toward Brazil as a continuing source of both high musical ideals and, vis-à-vis the rainforest depletion problem, ecological alarm. Ironically, concentrated attention on the latter may have helped generate more interest in the former. Native dancer Milton Nascimento's latest project is an ambitious concept album aimed at paying respects to the Amazon Indians—and inherently pointing out their threatened lifestyles—while also relishing the plush possibilities of studio-oriented pop production. *Txai* (the title is a fond greeting of the Kaxinawa Indians) is a broad-minded, joyous, and sometimes jarring mixture of musical impulses. It veers from his own native instincts and actual vocal field recordings (from Nascimento's trip up river) to some pure, lush pop à la Brazil. What results is a portrait of a nation rich in culture and resources, bravely fighting the death knell of the

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By comparison, Ivan Lins has found a stylistic middle ground. Lins, who got a boost in public profile with his appearance on Quincy Jones' heralded *Back On The Block*, follows a pop imperative in that his tunes are . . . well . . . supremely tuneful. In keeping with the intuitively adventurous Brazilian harmonic sense, Lins is refined in the art of turns-of-a-chordal phrase. It is those detours from harmonic norms that distinguish his efforts. Vocally, his tenor is a limber instrument, but is also admirably understated and lucid, which serves to accent the integrity of the melodies. The guitar work of Heitor T.P.—fiery in his electric solos, propulsive and seductive in his acoustic rhythm playing—provides an ideal foil in the forefront, while the firm, North American rhythm section of bassist Tony Levin and drummer Vinnie Colaiuta stays in tight dialog with the Brazilian percussion beds.

On the warm, balladic "Four Corners," the r&b connection is punched up in the mix, with sweet horn lines reminiscent of co-producer Larry Williams' old band, Seawind. "Brand New Samba" and "America, Brasil" serve as role models, thematically and structurally, for Lins' pan-global synthesis, merging Brazilian rhythmic forms with American pop vernacular. In Lins' musical fusion, all parties seem to be mutually compatible. It's a handsome package and a textbook case of cultural symbiosis. (reviewed on CD) —Josef Woodard



## ROY HARGROVE

**PUBLIC EYE**—Novus 3113-2-N: *PUBLIC EYE; SPIRITUAL COMPANION; SEPTEMBER IN THE RAIN; LADA; ONCE IN A WHILE; HEARTBREAKER; END OF A LOVE AFFAIR; NIGHT WATCH; YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT LOVE IS; LITTLE BENNIE (CRAZEOLGY); WHAT'S NEW.* (67:34)

**Personnel:** Hargrove, trumpet; Antonio Hart, alto sax; Stephen Scott, piano; Christian McBride, bass; Billy Higgins, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

## MARLON JORDAN

**LEARSON'S RETURN**—Columbia CK 46930: *LEARSON'S RETURN; TWEET; SWEET DREAMS; WAITING FOR B; TUTE EXCURSION; DEVERN; INSIDE THE HAREM; IN A MELLOTONE.*

**Personnel:** Jordan, trumpet; Tim Warfield, tenor

sax; Peter Martin, piano; Tarus Mateen, bass; Troy Davis, drums.

★ ★ ½

These two albums represent a 1990s appropriation of styles of the '50s and '60s. Roy Hargrove is more '50s-like, Marlon Jordan more '60s-like. But Jordan appears once-removed from his ultimate source, Miles Davis, since he arrives via Wynton Marsalis—or more specifically, what Wynton was doing five or so years ago.

Hargrove is the warmer, more mature trumpeter. *Public Eye* finds him relaxed, not fighting the music or the instrument. Consequently, he recalls the fluency of Clifford Brown and Kenny Dorham and perhaps some of the fire of Red Rodney. Familiar tunes are another source of warmth on this album. Too often young players neglect standard tunes in favor of complex or modal originals (a mistake on the Jordan album) and you get a case of too much abstraction. But "September In The Rain," "Once In A While," "End Of A Love Affair," et al., show that Hargrove isn't afraid of melody, either written or improvised. And "Heartbreaker," one of his four originals on the album, and Bennie Harris' "Little Bennie" show that he is equally adept at the blues and bebop. In Hart and the rhythm section he has companions tuned to the right era, although Hart has a more strident approach than the trumpeter.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 42

# BALANCE ON THE EDGE

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**BIG BUT NOT BAD**

by Art Lange

**E**specially in days of economic uncertainty, big band leaders must not only be creative, but resourceful and loaded with perseverance. So it's cheering to notice the number of successful large ensemble recordings of late. All of the following, untraditional big bands, contain something of value, you just have to dig a little deeper to find it.

My favorite disc under review comes from what's conceivably the unlikeliest source. Finnish percussionist/composer **Edward Vesala** has contributed a few moody, intriguing sessions to the ECM catalog, but *Ode To The Death Of Jazz* (ECM 843 196-2; 56:27: ★★★★★½) is probably the most ambitious, with spicy writing and a sense of mood over mechanics. Painted with strokes of subtle, surprising color—light on brass, heavy on breathy reeds, vibes, accordion, guitars, and synths—the music proceeds with a fetching hesitancy, or perhaps compositional caution, that adds a melancholic edge. Each piece explores a different expression; there's a spirited tango, introspective chamber music, high-life riffs, hypnotic drumming, and rockish guitar. Altogether, thoughtful and still adventurous.

The German pianist Alexander von Schlippenbach, head honcho of the improvising hurricane known as the Globe Unity Orchestra,



ENID FARBER

Andy Sheppard: glistening twists

has now formed the **Berlin Contemporary Jazz Orchestra** to give equal time to writers. Their eponymous debut (ECM 841 777-2; 49:51: ★★★★★) suggests jazz is more a state of mind than a style. Kenny Wheeler's "Ana" is an accessible, 20-minute elegy and celebration, with episodes of mainstream swing and escapist modality, pushed along by a parade of eager soloists (some of Europe's best, including E.L. Petrowsky, Gerd Dudek, and

Thomas Heberer). But madcap Misha Mengelberg's pair of perverse pieces whip minimalist riffs, slapstick fragments, serious interludes, and hot blowing into a free-associative froth.

**Kenny Wheeler's** own orchestra, heard on *Music For Large & Small Ensembles* (ECM 843 152-2; 49:47/54:42: ★★★★★), is studded with distinctive players on a loose leash, like John Abercrombie, Peter Erskine, and fellow Brits Evan Parker, Paul Rutherford, Stan Sulzmann, Dave Holland, and Norma Winstone, whose vocalese lends a warmth to the horn lines. As a soloist, Wheeler is not prone to overstatement or aggression, and his charts are similarly assured, sophisticated, and strong on melody. "The Sweet Time Suite" is a marvelously integrated composition that fills the entire first CD with an autumnal elegance, notwithstanding a few succinct, savory, free escapades.

Another, younger Brit courting popularity is **Andy Sheppard**. His *Soft On The Inside* (Antilles 422 842927-2; 53:28: ★★★★★), fortunately, isn't, though the music is sometimes jittery and jangly, like a gangly teenager who's grown too fast for his bones, but with enough glistening twists to keep anyone alert and anxious. Four I-o-n-g cuts allow plenty of room for soloists—Gary Valente's trombone can barely be contained, Claude Deppa's trumpet cavorts Dizzily, and the leader's gutsy tenor puts down real roots. Special honors go to cellist Ernst Reijseger and drummer Han Ben-

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NATHAN DAVIS



nink for general weirdness. The tunes give off heat, especially a samba—synth mimicking accordion—that degenerates into a mariachi and other madness, titled "Carla Carla Carla" (three guesses who it's for).

La Grand Dame herself is on hand to oversee the **Orchestra Jazz Siciliana** as it *Plays The Music Of Carla Bley* (Xtra WATT 4; 45:27: ★★★). They play it slick, with a couple of solid soloists—guitarist Pino Greco and bright-toned altoist Orazio Maugeri—and two ringers, trombonist Valente and fluid bassist Steve Swallow, adding verisimilitude. The material, too, is pleasant enough—I believe the word used to be "tasty"—but not really challenging; everything's from her "accessible" '70s and '80s bag. Too bad they didn't dig into Carla's trunk and salvage some of her knotty '60s tunes.

**Gil Evans** remains, posthumously, the biggest influence on electric big-band jazz; sadly, the latest from his namesake orchestra, *Tribute To Gil* (Soul Note 121 209-2; 46:22: ★★★½), suffers from sloppy editing, uneven sound, and wayward inspiration. Recorded live in '88, the band is bordering on chaos—not an unusual situation, but one they fail to remedy in their usual tightrope-walking fashion. Special guests Bireli Lagrene (eschewing Django for flashy rock chops) and Michal Urbaniak provide piquant solos, but the rest is pedestrian.

The songs may be just as familiar, but superior players make the **Big Band Charlie Mingus' Live At The Theatre Boulogne-Billancourt Paris Vol. 1** (Soul Note 121 192-2; 60:24: ★★★½) a solo lover's delight. Though "The Shoes Of The Fisherman's Wife" may not capture the swirling abandon of the original, the other tunes build a swell of passion, and these guys—Jimmy Knepper, John Handy, Jon Faddis, Clifford Jordan, Nick Brignola, et al.—know how to milk them, incisively. Highest marks go to David Murray, whose exhilarating work repays some of the debt his octet owes Mingus.

Actually, the **Vinny Golia Large Ensemble** plumbs some of the subterranean sonorities and hit-and-run tactics Mingus favored on *Pilgrimage To Obscurity* (9 Winds 0130; 73:49: ★★★), but the results are unique and intriguing. Example: "What You Know Is Not My Fault" begins with a three-trumpet flourish akin to Stravinsky's "Fanfare For Two Trumpets," then a percussion interlude leads into a marauding theme titled "Ted Williams Calls The Mick And Renders Touch Sensitivity Useless." Uh-huh. "Views" is neo-bop of exaggerated Dolphy-esque contours which segues into "Serene" (not the Dophy tune), a slow ooze of melody. "The Kreikan" starts out like Alban Berg, flows into a bass sax over a forest of percussion, then a tuba/trumpet/trombone trio, then . . . you get the picture. Strange things are happening.

There's a classical influence on **Andre Duchesne's** atonal writing in *L' Ou L'* (Victo CD 010; 70:22: ★★★½), too, and his pieces for solo cello, string quartet, and sax quartet are stunning. Elsewhere, Duchesne offers blocks of sonorities rather than blends, frequent mechanistic rhythms (à la Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*), electric ostinatos, and plenty of art-rock writing reminiscent of Frank Zappa. It's a grand concoction of sound, but loses points as the text is French and there is no English translation.

Arguably, the father figure of all of this type of cross-bred, postmodern writing for big band was Stan Kenton. Four previously unreleased live CDs give a hint—but only a hint—of his influence. *Festival Of Modern American Jazz* (Status CD 101; 53:35: ★★★½) dates from 1954 and features a few of Bill Russo's progressive charts along with Bill Holman's honest swingers. Frank Rosolino, Lennie Niehaus, Charlie Mariano, and Mel Lewis spark the big-boned, restless arrangements. *At The Rendezvous Vol. 1* (Status CD 102; 59:53: ★★★), from '58, is nearly submerged under the blasé

arrangements of pop songs, though Niehaus' solo on "My Funny Valentine," and a Latin take on "Artistry In Rhythm" score high points. *In New Jersey* (Status CD 103; 65:18: ★★★½), a year later, at least swings hard, Bill Mathieu offers some byzantine charts, and Jimmy Knepper's winsome, loose-limbed trombone is introduced. 1961's *Mellophonium Magic* (Status CD 104; 58:41: ★★★½) is overloaded with dull ballads, lacking Kenton's usual eccentricity. Though his most experimental work isn't to be heard here, Kenton fans will still have a field day with these. (all reviewed on CD) **DB**

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 38

McBride's bass cuts through the band with a big-beat sound, and Scott is an astute accompanist and swinging soloist. The veteran Higgins is our man Higgins—the name speaks for itself. (reviewed on CD)

The problems with the Jordan album lie in a certain coldness and the derivative deference to early Wynton. Also, Warfield overplays the Wayne Shorter connection. And to continue the analogy with Miles' mid-'60s band, Martin is often in a Herbie Hancock bag. Mateen and Davis handle the various undercurrents appro-

riately, but on top the band is too abstract. The originals, five by the leader and two by producer Delfeayo Marsalis, seem to push the limits of harmony, and then the solos stretch it farther. Even Ellington's "In A Mellotone" suffers the same fate at the hands of the soloists. This isn't an "outside" band, but it's a rather cold "inside" band—strange, considering Jordan is from New Orleans. One hates to criticize young players, especially ones as talented and with as much potential as these, but there's too much unresolved playing here. (reviewed on cassette)  
—Owen Cordle



## FRANK SINATRA

**WHERE ARE YOU?**—Capitol CDP 7 91209 2: *WHERE ARE YOU?*; *THE NIGHT WE CALLED IT A DAY*; *I COVER THE WATERFRONT*; *MAYBE YOU'LL BE THERE*; *LAURA*; *LONELY TOWN*; *AUTUMN LEAVES*; *I'M A FOOL TO WANT YOU*; *I THINK OF YOU*; *WHERE IS THE ONE?*; *THERE'S NO YOU*; *BABY, WON'T YOU PLEASE COME HOME*; *I CAN READ BETWEEN THE LINES*; *IT WORRIES ME*; *RAIN (FALLING FROM THE SKIES)*; *DON'T WORRY 'BOUT ME*. (54:05)

**Personnel:** Sinatra, vocals; orchestra arranged and conducted by Gordon Jenkins (cuts 1-12), Nelson Riddle (13-16).

★★★★★

**COME SWING WITH ME!**—Capitol CDP 7 94520 2: *DAY BY DAY*; *SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY*; *ALMOST LIKE BEING IN LOVE*; *FIVE MINUTES MORE*; *AMERICAN BEAUTY ROSE*; *YES INDEED!*; *ON THE SUNNY SIDE OF THE STREET*; *DON'T TAKE YOUR LOVE FROM ME*; *THAT OLD BLACK MAGIC*; *LOVER*; *PAPER DOLL*; *I'VE HEARD THAT SONG BEFORE*; *I LOVE YOU*; *WHY SHOULD I CRY OVER YOU*; *HOW COULD YOU DO A THING LIKE THAT TO ME*; *RIVER, STAY 'WAY FROM MY DOOR*; *I GOTTA RIGHT TO SING THE BLUES*. (44:09)

**Personnel:** Sinatra, vocals; orchestra arranged and conducted by Billy May (1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 11-13), Nelson Riddle (14-16), Skip Martin (17), arranged by Heinie Beau and conducted by Billy May (2, 5, 8-10).

★★★

The past year has seen the CD reissue boom sweep teen idol-turned-Vegas charmer Frank Sinatra into its arms. Both Capitol and Reprise, the latter a label of his own creation, have issued celebrated multi-disc sets. With *Where Are You?* and *Come Swing With Me!*, Capitol begins its journey through its vast, nearly-decade-long catalog of Sinatra titles.

From elation (swing along with me) to hangovers and loneliness (in the wee small hours), Sinatra's '50s book with Capitol ran the gamut of pop love songs, forming a nice bridge from the big bands to Elvis. What made Sinatra a significant musical force—and not just another pop star—had everything to do with an immense talent immersed in the creation and love of America's songbook. It's no accident jazz musicians tilted in his direction, following his repertoire for their own books. A song by Frank was never the same when he got through with it—the *interpretation* of "standards" begins with Sinatra.

That kind of interpretation and the alternating mood swings (no pun intended) referred to above jump out at you with these two very well-recorded discs. In the case of *Come Swing With Me!*, from 1961, the emotional drift is a relatively superficial one, rescued only by



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\$22.95, 247 pp.

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Sinatra's by-then classic phrasing, intonation, and emphasis. Longtime collaborator/former big-band trumpeter Billy May's busy, brassy charts keep up with Sinatra but are a tad squeaky clean. (Not until the arrival of the Basie Band and distinctive jazz soloists in '62 was the swing equation really balanced.) Despite Sinatra's fine execution, swing-era tunes like "American Beauty Rose," "Five Minutes More," and "Yes Indeed!" strain credibility. For this reviewer (and against general critical opinion), these forgettable songs hearken back to a time of preconsciousness and fantasy—fun, swinging affairs, but oddly farcical.

Not so with 1957's *Where Are You?*, Sinatra's first recording in stereo. His vulnerability, ease with slow tempos, seemingly effortless ability to get lost (taking the listener with him) inside a song—all these qualities are here. Gordon Jenkins (another longtime collaborator) mingles strings with warm brass, all tastefully played with pregnant silences, interludes, and emotional warmth bordering on confession. *Where Are You?* gives us Sinatra's rich baritone treating songs like living organisms: "I'm A Fool To Want You" enters whimsically, with the tempo slightly up; pauses emerge as his words sink in, everyone returning to the refrain at a slightly slower pace, echoing the song's implicit message. Haunting, not sentimental, Sinatra's inner life away from the microphone becomes almost palpable.

Another longtime collaborator, Nelson Riddle, gets into the act with the final four (bonus) tracks, signing off with "Don't Worry 'Bout Me," a Sinatra staple—slow tune, mandatory brass, and boozed-up, resigned, hard guy Frank playing his cards close to the vest once again. (reviewed on CD) —John Ephland



## QUEST

**OF ONE MIND**—CMP CD 47: COMMONALITY; OF ONE MIND; CHANGUITO TAPESTRY; PASSAGES. (41:51)

**Personnel:** David Liebman, soprano sax; Richie Beirach, piano; Ron McLure, bass; Billy Hart, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

**QUEST**—Storyville STCD 4158: DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE; WISTERIA; SOFTLY AS IN A MORNING SUNRISE; ELM; NAPANOCH; LONELY WOMAN. (45:42)

**Personnel:** Liebman, soprano sax, alto flute; Beirach, piano; George Mraz, bass; Al Foster, drums.

★ ★ ★ ½

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1982, is the more traditional jazz approach where specific roles are clearly defined. A single soloist steps forward while the others support. And with the soprano sax being the primary solo voice here, this early *Quest* offering comes off as Liebman's date. *Of One Mind*, Quest's debut on CMP Records, is a spontaneous group improvisation where the roles are constantly shifting, allowing for simultaneous solos and more interactive commentary by all the players.

*Quest* features the consummate post-bop rhythm section of Foster and Mraz. Al's relent-

less ride cymbal and his way of creatively breaking up the beat with surprising snare strokes define swinging vehicles like "Softly As In A Morning Sunrise" and Liebman's "Napanoch." Mraz, a drummer's dream bassist, pushes the rhythm forward with surging, deep-toned lines. Beirach's staccato sense of rhythm often goes against the flow of that swinging pulse, but his bitona harmonies and sparse comping open up the form more, hinting at a direction he would pursue more deeply on *Of One Mind*. Liebman's haunting alto-flute take on Ornette's "Lonely Woman," over strummed piano strings and random cymbal crashes, also alludes to the freer direction the band would take in later incarnations.

*Of One Mind* begins with the rubato invocation "Commonality," setting the tone for this provocative album. McLure's bowed bass lines and Liebman's soaring soprano create an interwoven flow while Beirach drops in sparse single notes on top of Hart's textural brushwork. At some point, McLure reverts back to a bass role, allowing Beirach to come forward and interact with longtime collaborator Liebman (they've been kindred spirits since 1970). Hart's cymbal and brush work on this probing piece reconfirm his status as one of the great colorists on the drum kit. Straight 4/4 enters the picture on the title cut. "Changuito Tapestry," based on the Cuban *songo* beat, ends on a compelling note with McLure overdubbing pizzicato lines on top of bowed lines. His big-

toned bass is also showcased on a gorgeous duet section of the lengthy "Passages," which features a melodic Hart solo that is a must-hear for all drummers. (reviewed on CD)

—Bill Milkowski

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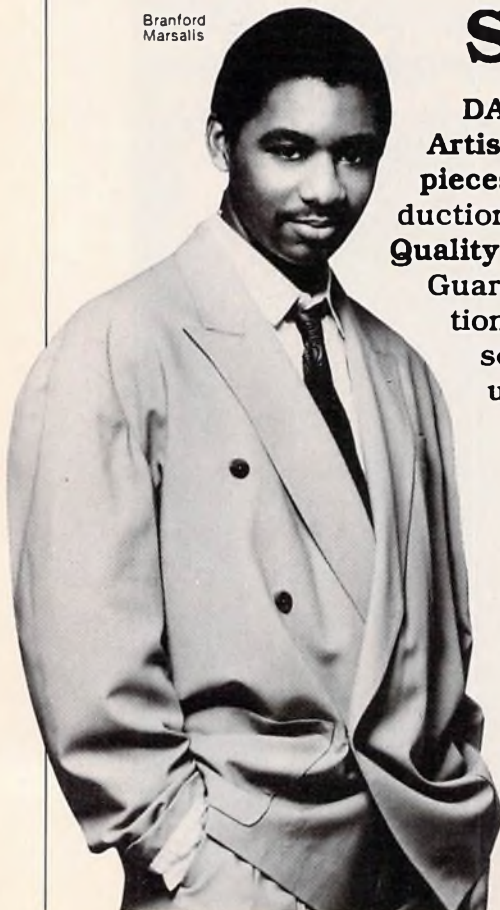
## MILES DAVIS

**AGHARTA**—Columbia C2K 46799: *PRELUDE (PART I); PRELUDE (PART II); MAIYSHA; INTERLUDE; THEME FROM JACK JOHNSON.* (45:28/52:06)

**Personnel:** Davis, trumpet, organ; Sonny Fortune, soprano sax, alto sax, flute; Michael Henderson, Fender bass; Pete Cosey, guitar, Synthi, percussion; Al Foster, drums; Reggie Lucas, guitar; Mtume, percussion.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

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## SANTANA

**LOTUS**—Columbia C2K 46764: *GOING HOME; A-1 FUNK; EVERY STEP OF THE WAY; BLACK MAGIC WOMAN; GYPSY QUEEN; OYE COMO VA; YOURS IS THE LIGHT; BATUKA; XIBABA; STONE FLOWER; WAITING; CASTILLOS DE ARENA, PART 1; FREE ANGELA; SAMBA DE SAUSALITO; MANTRA; KYOTO; CASTILLOS DE ARENA, PART 2; INCIDENT AT NESHABUR; SE A CABO; SAMBA PA TI; MR. UDO; TOUSSAINT L'OVERTURE.* (59.05/59.48)

**Personnel:** Carlos Santana, guitar, vocals; Tom Coster, keyboards; Michael Shrieve, drums; Doug Rauch, bass; Richard Kermode, electric piano; Armando Peraza, congas; Jose "Chepito" Areas, timbales; Leon Thomas, percussion.

★ ★ ★ ★

Both of these two-CD sets are culled from mid-'70s concerts in Japan, both were fairly subversive for their time (which is probably why they were only previously available in the States via the import bins), and both summon up the spirit of Jimi Hendrix to varying degrees.

*Agharta*, from an afternoon performance on February 1, 1975 at Osaka's Festival Hall, is a groove-oriented, wah-wah-inflected, distortion-laced invocation that would no doubt scare your mother. This landmark electric album (and its companion set, *Pangaea*, culled from evening performances on the same date—see "Reviews" Dec. '90) unlocked a door for a whole generation of musicians who became intrigued by the possibilities of getting past the notes and dealing more in catharsis than precision on their instruments. Pete Cosey's wild excursions pointed the way, spawning an entire school of "sick" guitar playing. But *Agharta* was hardly just noise for noise sake. Cosey's sickness is grounded by rock-solid, syncopated grooves created by Foster, former Motown bassist Henderson, and Lucas. Their quintessential pocket playing connected Miles to the funk of Sly Stone, James Brown, and the Meters.

Sonny Fortune's urgent, angular sax lines on top of these mesmerizing funk vamps predate Steve Colemans and Greg Osby's M-Base experiments by 10 years. Miles himself is in fine, psychedelic form on this set, emulating Jimi with wah-wah blasts of his own on trumpet. And notice how he uses the organ as a baton to abruptly change the vibe from ugly and aggressive on "Prelude (Part II)" to smooth and mellow on "Maiysha." Just as that flute-laden buppie ballad threatens to turn saccharine, Cosey steps in to puncture the sweetness and light with another of his sick onslaughts. The band also reaches deep into a blues bag during a segment from the sprawling "Theme From Jack Johnson" jam, producing some of Miles' most inspired playing of the afternoon.

Santana delved into some catharsis of his own on *Lotus*, recorded live in Osaka a year and a half before the Miles dates. Again, the spirit of Hendrix hovers over this concert and is very present in Carlos' wah-wah wailing. He unleashes with fiery abandon on "Every Step Of The Way" and "Oye Como Va" and even throws in a quote from Jimi's "Third Stone From The Sun" on the Latin jam "Gypsy Queen."

Unlike his slick pop projects of the '80s, Carlos is holding nothing back here. On *Lotus*, he's reaching for something deeper than record sales. It's a portrait of the '70s guitar hero in full flight. (reviewed on CD) — *Bill Milkowski*

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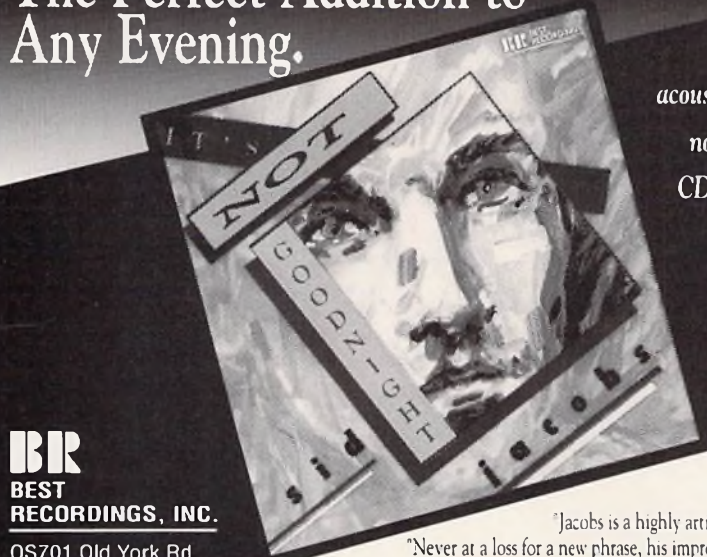
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## A CROW(N)ING ACHIEVEMENT

by Fred Bouchard

**D**inah! Was there anyone finer or more durable singing the pop tunes of the '50s? If Sarah and Ella are the timeless divas of American popular song, **Dinah Washington** is its tireless Cinderella. For versatility, conviction, verve, and sheer energy, she spread her wings among these goddesses, put her regal stamp on classics and Tin Pan trash alike, slaved to earn her title "The Queen." Eventually she had it all in her grasp: men, fame, commercial success; she was Mercury's Nat Cole as a hot property. Tragedy was she died of excesses at 39, and rarely exercised artistic license beyond interpretation to choosing her material. But, as she crowed, she could and did sing the hell out of (and honey into) any tune at all.

Kiyoshi Koyama's meticulous and exhaustive presentation of the 444 tracks Washington cut for Mercury, EmArcy, and Wing make perhaps the most impressive compilation yet assembled for any singer. Of the unexpurgated monumental collection *Dinah Washington: The Complete Mercury Recordings 1946-61* (Mercury, seven three-CD boxes), only volumes 3-7 (1952-61, 15 CDs) are considered here. (See *DB* May '88 for a review of volumes 1 and 2.)

The prospect of wading through the 1,012



HERMAN LEONARD

Sheer dyna-flow: Dinah Washington

minutes of 328 mostly three-minute takes (few repeats)—comprising the second half of her Mercury career chronologically (1952-61) and about 3/4 of her total output—was a fearsome one. I eyed the ranks of vapid titles skeptically, that embarrassing pop schlock with painted-in chorus and automatic orchestra. But the going was sheer "dyna-flow," remarkably smooth and pleasant. I came away from this vast library nurturing aural images only of Dinah's ripe, intense, friendly, sunny, confident voice. Dinah had shone like glory on the

wonderful sessions, and had cut through the rest of the pap and clap-trap like a hot knife through lard. Absolutely and instantly identifiable! (But the images were visual, too: I'd seen her at Newport '60.) Simply magnificent and inimitable! Utterly natural and charismatic!

Washington's voice itself is a study in contrasts: bittersweet yet smiling, languid yet incisive, brazen yet controlled, relaxed yet urgent. She takes liberties (too sure to be called "chances") yet remains utterly true to both the song and herself. Through this bewildering panoply of tunes and styles (blues, show, Sinatra, r&b, soul, calypso, jump, novelty, u-kall-it), Dinah never turns in a half-hearted (and only rarely a lackluster) performance. She gives amazing consistency, unflappable endurance, emotional forthrightness.

Dinah links Billie Holiday (with her tiny phrase-ending curls) and Aretha Franklin (clarion gospel punch) with the power punch of Bessie Smith's bawdy blues. Born Ruth Jones in Tuscaloosa, Alabama on Aug. 29, 1924, Washington always kept that clarity, passion, and gospelly edge of her church choir days. Lionel Hampton discovered her in 1941 in a Chicago club, changed her name, put her to work. Known in her prime for carrying white hits to black audiences, Dinah opened the door of soul to singers who followed—Nancy Wilson, Anita Baker, Esther Phillips.

Packaging is equally exhaustive. Boxes contain session info, personnel, index, informative

CONTINUED ON PAGE 48

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**Personnel:** John Norwood Fisher, bass; Phillip "Fish" Fisher, drums; Kendall Rey Jones, guitar; Christopher Gordon Dowd, trombone, keyboards; Angelo Christopher Moore, lead vocals, sax; Walter Adam Kibby II, Fernando Pullum, trumpet; John Bigham, guitars, keyboards; T-Bone, percussion; Vicky Calhoun, Kristen Vigar, Aklia Chin, James Grey, Greg Bell, Natalie Jackson, Byron West, Larry Fishburne, Nadja & Kyva Haynes, Wendell Holmes, Gaz Mayall, Susan Rogers, Sultana Muhammad, Katherine Cederquist, Clip Payne, Jeff Conners, Susan Stoval, background vocals.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

It's rare that truly fresh material comes from the rock world these days. There wasn't much innovative music to be highly recommended in last year's releases other than exceptional efforts by Sonic Youth, Living Colour, and Jane's Addiction. One of this year's most exciting albums is the latest release by L. A. homies Fishbone. They crash-smash-flash their way through a colorful rock-meets-funk & soul terrain of tunes that are sardonic and poignant, humorous and sexy, street-smart and exhorting. Above all, the music is adventurous and teeming with life.

After six years of cranking out highly-charged albums and fiery live gigs, Fishbone has made its first important album, ably demonstrating its stylistic versatility while at the same time showcasing a lyrical articulateness that forces you to sit up and really listen. There's a surprise around every corner, whether it's embedded in the lyrics of the go-go-flavored "So Many Millions" and the doo-wop-meets-Hendrix tune, "Those Days Are Gone," or contained in the snippets of songs wedged between the longer pieces. Throughout the album there are several short "If I Had A . . . I'd" pieces (which serve as quick-energy jabs at the unreal worlds of TV and the military), as well as a dirge in 3/4 time and a powerful rewriting of the Lord's Prayer as a junkie's ode to crack.

What makes this album so remarkable is how effortlessly Fishbone has stitched together such a wide variety of black-music traditions. Prime examples: "Housework" is upbeat funk with traces of ska that shifts gears into a horn-led New Orleans street march, "Everyday Sun-

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shine" is a nod to vintage Sly Stone yet rocks with gospel fervor, and "Naz-TEE May'en" gets down à la James Brown. Another pleasant surprise: predictable rap and sampling excursions, staples of contemporary black music, are conspicuously missing. (reviewed on CD)

—*Dar Ouellette*

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 46

and entertaining notes. *Volumes 3 and 4* even print the lyrics—not that Dinah's precision diction ever faltered; that the practice was abandoned thereafter may signal chagrin at the material. Quibble: you have to read tiny catalog numbers to know which disc you're holding. A big 1, 2, 3 etched on discs would help.

*Volume 3, 1952-54* (53 titles; 834 675-2; 198:18: ★★★★★½) gets my vote with the best jazz content, fresh and juicy vocals. With Bob Shad's jazz sessions for EmArcy, Dinah's joy appears unbounded surrounded with the Brown/Roach 5, Clark Terry, and Maynard Ferguson. Yet already she was garnering more

fame for pop tunes than her gritty, visceral jazz singing; her 1953 hit of "What A Difference A Day Makes" haunted her career not unlike "Brokenhearted Melody" plagued Sarah Vaughan; Esther Phillips gave the song a hot disco cover in 1976.

*Volume 4, 1954-56* (63 titles; 834 683-2; 207:10: ★★★★★) gets points for pianist Wynton Kelly (with her six years) as a perfect foil: scintillating, individualistic, self-effacing. Good, relaxed Hal Mooney Big Band peppered with horn solos and obbligatos by Frank Rosolino and Cannonball Adderley. Eight super jazz tracks feature Cecil Payne, Terry, and Jimmy Cleveland. A bit bland overall.

*Volume 5, 1956-58* (71 titles; 838 952-2; 207:59: ★★★★★) has plenty of gutsy blues in sessions with crack big bands led by Ernie Wilkins, Eddie Chamblee (smooth tenorman and Cole-like singer in her hubby parade), or Quincy Jones. Buoyant spirits prevail, Dinah's piercing true beauty counterpointed by pretty solos, a diamond set amid sapphires. It renews a proud kinship with Bessie Smith.

*Volume 6, 1958-60* (73 titles; 838 956-2; 198:38: ★★★★★) features boring vanilla studio bands, a maddeningly turgid chorus, so-so charts, virtually no blowing. Dinah's ballad style can be experienced close-up and at leisure, and she shines. Big hits like "Unforgettable" made her a teen heroine. A single "hmm," "cooo," or upturned tail carries amazing poignancy. Great for digestion and sultry seduction: 90 percent slow tempos. On "Stardust" and "Cold, Cold Heart," Dinah firmly stamps her approval; elsewhere she pops out ditties with her stainless cookie-cutter.

*Volume 7, 1961* (68 titles; 838 960-2; 199:38: ★★) exhibits Dinah's extraordinarily fresh views of mediocre stuff as she wades through slow tempos, suppurating strings. Dinah gives 'em her best shot, has her fun with straight charts—hear her fool with the lyric and bluesify "Green Dolphin Street." Blues à la Bessie, best of show, available elsewhere. Her 1962 Roulette sides were no better. Truth to tell, nobody could ever package and reduce to wax Dinah's mighty and riveting presence. **DB**

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## 1 HANK CRAWFORD AND JIMMY McGRIFF.

"Hank's Groove" (from *ON THE BLUE SIDE*, Milestone) Crawford, alto sax, composer; McGriff, organ; Jimmy Ponder, guitar; Vance James, drums; Rudy Van Gelder, engineer.

It's Hank Crawford. Jimmy McGriff? I grew up on this music, the style of it, the recorded sound of it. It has the sound of those great old Blue Note and Prestige records. That, to me, is the classic sound of jazz the last 30 years, Rudy Van Gelder's productions. Hank inspired me to play the saxophone. He's got a real combination of elegance and earthiness that I've always liked. That's what knocked me out so much when I was a kid. I heard Hank when he was with the Ray Charles band when I was 11. He's just so soulful. He uses elements of bebop and blues, and with organ groups he plays particularly well. Anything he does I'll give 5 stars.

**2 BENNY CARTER.** "Key Largo" (from *COOKIN' AT CARLOS I*, MusicMasters) Carter, alto sax, composer; Richard Wyands, piano; Lisle Atkinson, bass; Al Harewood, drums.

Talk about elegance! It's got to be Benny. Is this one of his tunes? He's just a classy human being and musician. He's got the history of American music in his playing. Is this at Carlos I? It's got the real dry sound of that club. Benny is one of the kindest, most brilliant people I've ever met. We should all be so lucky to be that on top of life at 83. How many stars have you got? Benny gets more than there are.

**3 CHRISTOPHER HOLLYDAY.** "Ko Ko" (from *CHRISTOPHER HOLLYDAY*, Novus) Hollyday, alto sax; Wallace Roney, trumpet; Cedar Walton, piano; David Williams, bass; Billy Higgins, drums; Charlie Parker, composer.

Phil Woods and Tom Harrell. I have such respect and admiration for Phil. He gets down in the time, locks in there, and you couldn't blast him out with dynamite. To be able to swing that hard at this tempo is not easy. He's just got the sound, the phrasing. Just the way he articulates is so clean. His time is so sure and he plays so creatively in the idiom. I've probably learned more as an alto player from Phil and Benny than from anybody. It's impossible for me to rate Phil Woods.

MB: What if it isn't Phil Woods?

DS: Richie Cole? I'd give it 5 stars anyway.

MB: Christopher Hollyday.

DS: Wow! I would've sworn that was Phil. He did that little throaty shake like Phil. This is that young player, 19 [21]? It's

## DAVID SANBORN

by Michael Bourne

Not many musicians have criss-crossed all the forms and styles of American popular music as much as alto saxist David Sanborn. He first gigged professionally as a teenager with Little Milton and other r&b musicians around St. Louis. He played with Paul Butterfield and, in the '70s, often alongside the Brecker Brothers, became a fixture of the New York studios. He was also a regular with the Gil Evans Orchestra. He's also recorded a dozen or so albums of his own, the newest being on Elektra/Musician with Bill Frisell and NRBQ's Terry Adams.

Sanborn's sound evolved from the soulful cry of his idol, Hank Crawford, yet even when his band is rocking it's not unusual for Sanborn to break free like another inspiration, Ornette Coleman. Sanborn's much-missed television show, *Night Music*, syndicated for two seasons at the end of the '80s, pre-



PAUL NATHAN/PHOTO RESERVE

sented a kaleidoscope of musicians (see *DB* Apr. '90). "This is a very important time in music," said Sanborn, "because people are looking for something to connect to. We said with *Night Music* that there's a great tradition in American music of which jazz and blues are the major part."

This was Sanborn's first Blindfold Test.

really encouraging to hear a young player play with that much conviction.

**4 ORNETTE COLEMAN.** "Ramblin'" (from *GREAT MOMENTS IN JAZZ*, Atlantic) Coleman, alto sax, composer; Don Cherry, trumpet; Charlie Haden, bass; Billy Higgins, drums.

That's Ornette, the quartet. Charlie Haden, I guess Billy Higgins, and Don Cherry. I've been listening to a lot of Ornette recently. Again, he's got the sound. I always think of Ornette as a blues player. He's got that inherent blues sound, especially on these early recordings. He's so evocative. I always get a lot of visual images from Ornette. You can almost see Texas landscapes in his playing. He's somebody I never get tired of. 100 stars.

MB: You've given 5 stars or better for everything.

DS: I'm not analytical like that. I listen to music to learn from it or enjoy it, hopefully both those things in the same music.

**5 KENNY GARRETT.** "Blue Moon" (from *PRISONER OF LOVE*, Atlantic) Garrett, alto sax, keyboards, synth guitar, percussion; Marcus Miller and Foley, bass; Ricky Wellman and Mino Cinelu, percussion.

It's hard to rate that. It could possibly be Kenny Garrett. It was nice the way they put those substitute changes in there, but there

really wasn't much playing on it. It was mostly just synthesizer, colors, changes, backbeat. It sounded like they're good players but there really wasn't a lot going on. Just for the professionalism, I'd give it 3 or 4 stars. Just objectively, there's a little disparity between the synthesizer sound and the saxophone sound. Part of the difficulty of playing with synthesizers is that you've got to be careful, because the synthesizers and electric guitars get in the way of the frequency of the alto. It's a very commercial record, and for that it's okay, but it doesn't have much interest for me. I hate to belittle anyone's efforts. Kenny's a great player. He's got great time and the ears of life.

**6 JOHN ZORN.** "A Shot In The Dark" (from *NAKED CITY*, Elektra) Zorn, alto sax, arranger; Bill Frisell, guitar; Wayne Horvitz, keyboards; Fred Frith, bass; Joey Baron, drums.

That's John Zorn. He always makes me laugh. I mean that in a complimentary way. I like the way he collages, puts things together. It's one of those TV or movie things, one of those spy, *Girl From UNCLE* things. I'll give it 5 stars because I like it. I like music if it's done with some conviction and intent and command of the elements involved. Bill Frisell has such a command of so many colors, he's like a great painter. I love the way Joey Baron plays. He really swings. That's the important element of any great music, that it swings. **DB**