

Carlos Santana • Lester Bowie • Stan Kenton Festival

DOWN BEAT

Jazz, Blues & Beyond

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RAY'S WORLD

The Whimsical,
Thoughtful
Ray Anderson

THE
39th ANNUAL
CRITICS POLL



16 RAY ANDERSON: BONE FROM ANOTHER PLANET

Is he from outer space, or just next door? Only he knows for sure. Witty trombonist Ray Anderson keeps wishing upon a star unlike any other. Michael Bourne unwittingly takes note.

FEATURES

20 39th ANNUAL DOWN BEAT INTERNATIONAL CRITICS POLL

From all corners of the globe, DB critics unite once again in praise of their favorite players, composers, arrangers, record companies . . . you name it.

25 LESTER BOWIE: TRIPPIN' THE BRASS FANTASTIC

Trumpeter Lester Bowie feels the brass connection inside out, celebrating his Brass Fantasy as the epitome of *musica Americana*. Not just the Art Ensemble, Lester's fantasies go sky high. Wayne K. Self pays heed.

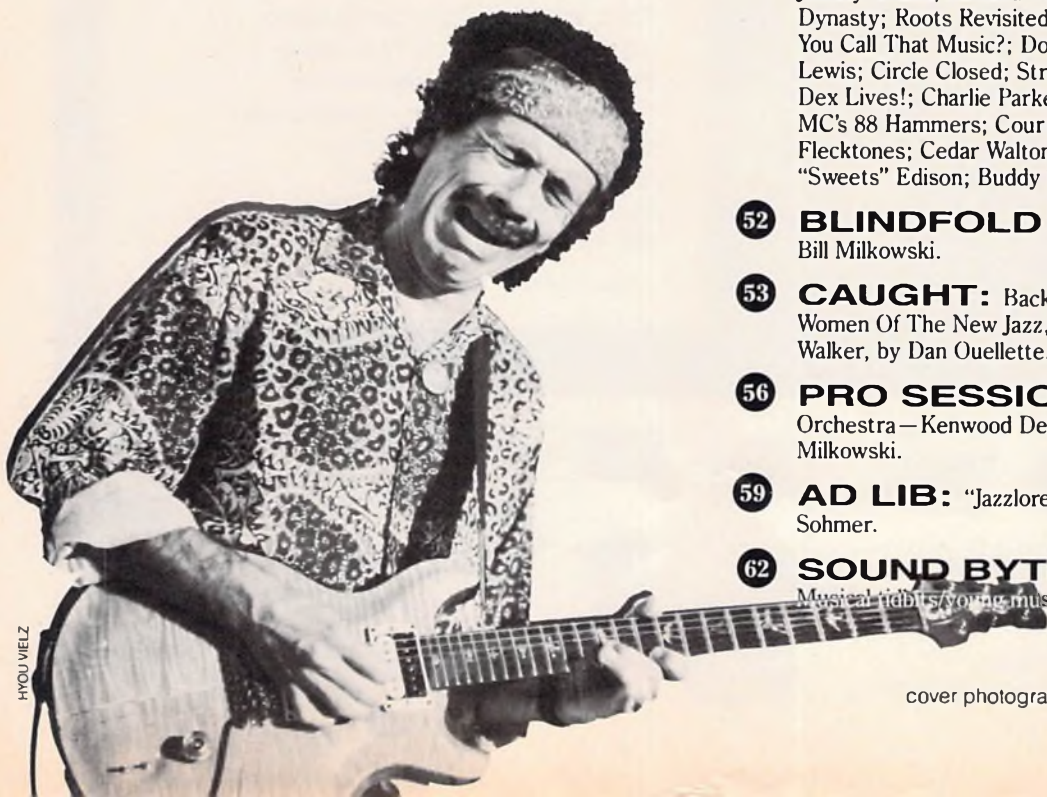
28 CARLOS SANTANA: IF NOTES WERE ORANGES

Perhaps no greater servant to the cause of music as healer, guitar man Carlos Santana continues to "move pelvic bones" with his "uplifting, joyous, spiritual music." Squeezing the juice out of every damn note, Carlos pours forth for Dan Ouellette.



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RAY ANDERSON

BONE FROM ANOTHER PLANET

By Michael Bourne

The Blue Note is jammed and jumping as Dr. John romps "Love For Sale" on the bandstand. Each night he's welcomed a different soloist—no rehearsal, just come and spice the gumbo. This night it's trombonist Ray Anderson and from the first, though the groove is full-tilt New Orleans, he's headed elsewhere. It ain't tailgate he's playing; more like rumble-seat. Ray smears and splatters all around and through the melody and the time—"I got some love for sale! Slide this!"



PHOTOS BY GENE MARTIN

"I have fun with Ray," says Dr. John. "He's a kicks cat. He plays some different shit. He goes to the edge of things. I dig his attitude, his heart, his real up spirit. I liked him the first time I heard him. He was singing different notes and doing some interval and harmony things that were very innovative for a trombone player. Another thing I got off on early on was that Ray ain't scared to just throw the shit out there. He'll throw stuff from left field, right field, the bleachers, the parking lot. No matter where it lands, it's cool."

Again this year, for the fifth year straight, Ray Anderson lands atop the **Down Beat** Critics Poll as #1 trombonist. That he became a trombonist was a child's intuition. "I guess, in some way, I'm supposed to play trombone," says Ray. "I started when I was eight, in 4th grade. They ask what instrument you want to play and you choose the trombone. It was only for the sound. I'd never seen one. I'd heard the trombone on my father's dixieland records. There was something about the sound."

Ironically, he realized that music was his calling when, the year after he graduated from high school in Chicago, he traveled around Europe without his trombone. "I bought a soprano sax in a pawnshop because it was small enough to fit in my knapsack. I knew I had to have an instrument. I bummed around and had a great time. That's when it became really clear that I could play music. I'd find an itinerant guitar player and have a jam. I acquired an alto recorder and the bass drum of a tabla. It really became clear that I couldn't exist without music. I'd been playing trombone for years already, so it seemed obvious that if I was going to play music, I was going to play trombone."

Ray eventually studied at McAllister College in Minneapolis, at the California Institute for the Arts, and earned a living in Los Angeles and San Francisco usually playing funk. Ray was excited by jazz—and more by the whole history of the music than specifically the trombone tradition. "When the inevitable influences arise, I take pains to point out that I'm much more influenced by Dizzy Gillespie and Coleman Hawkins, Sonny Rollins and Louis Armstrong than I am by any trombone player I can think of. I'd hear a trombone player and say, 'That's neat,' and I'd try to figure out what they did; but I'm going for the power and the feeling of the *music* more than trombone playing."

He'll acknowledge at least one particular affection. "I'm definitely a lifelong devotee of Vic Dickenson. He's probably responsible for me playing this instrument in the first place. He's the trombonist I have a really clear memory of on those dixieland records of my

father's. I remember this *Golden Age Of Dixieland* with Vic and Rex Stewart, Milt Hinton, George Wettling. I remember that gargling multiphonic sound Vic had, that way Vic had of tiptoeing around notes."

Ray settled in New York in 1972, landing one of his first important gigs in 1977 when he joined Anthony Braxton. Mark Helias was the bassist then and they've worked together often over the years—coincidentally from the latter '70s through the latter '80s in both the free-form trio BassDrumBone with drummer Gerry Hemingway and the avant-funk band Slickaphonics. Ray is featured on Mark's newest album, *Desert Blue*, and Mark is a regular with Ray's quartet, also co-producer of Ray's records *What Because* and *Wishbone* (see "Reviews" July '91).

"Mark is such a good musician," says Ray. "To have Mark in your band is to learn something. This cat is deep. And beyond that, there's a personal vibe that works. We have a good time together."

"Ray and I have a sort of telepathic communication," says Mark. "We're not alike in a lot of ways, but we learn from each other because we have different talents. He's learned from me probably some things about composition, harmony, things I've studied. One thing I've learned from him is that he's not afraid to do *anything*. No matter what his chops feel like, Ray just goes for it, just goes to get what he's got to get."

Ray's chops are phenomenal—from swooping legato to breakneck staccato, from the nastiest growls to the sweetest whimpers—but it's evident that he's not *about* technique, that he'll sometimes altogether forget technique. It's the *feeling* he's playing, and he's ballsy enough even to play *flat* if that's what happens. "It's important to me to transcend the technical thing. It's impossible to play trombone and not be in some way obsessed with technique, because it's hard to play and it doesn't get any easier. There's always a part of me that's monitoring what's going on with the lip and how does this feel and can you make that, but it's important that that not be what the music is about."

"And at a certain point I tell that part of me to shut up. I'm just going to play. We're just gonna hit and what comes out comes out. . . . What I'm always oriented to is, 'What's the emotion?' I can play a tune many different ways from night to night. Some nights I'll play 'Mona Lisa' and the emotion is lighthearted, tongue-in-

cheek, a little sarcastic. 'C'mon, Mona, have a good time. C'mon, let's dance!' But sometimes Mona is more serious, or sometimes I'm calling forth something from the past. I'm searching for the emotion, and a feeling played will move to another feeling—happy, sad, angry, sacred, joyous, humorous."

He shows his humorous feelings most of all: "If we're not having any fun what are we doing this for?" Ray's wit is often as Puck-ish as Clark Terry's, especially when he's singing. He's spotlighted

New Notes at the
Blue Note: Brother
from another
planet Dr. John
touches down with
Ray in the
bleachers. Or is it
the parking lot?



ENID FARBBER

himself as vocalist on each of his last records: "I'm Just A Lucky So And So" on *What Because* and "Comes Love" on *Wishbone*—often splitting notes multiphonically. He learned to split notes when singing with Slickaphonics: "I just ran into it. I move something in my throat and there it is. There's two tones and they make this burrrr."

There was a time when he was *only* singing. Ray was stricken with Bell's Palsy at the end of 1982. "I woke up one day and the left side of my face was completely paralyzed. I couldn't close my eye. I couldn't do anything. It's like a stroke because a nerve is affected. It shorts out. Without the myelin coding the nerve won't carry the electrical signal and you can't move anything. I couldn't play for a long time." He sang instead and, once his facial muscles reawakened enough, played tuba for a while—not as much pressure needed—until at last his chops returned. One consequence of the trauma is that "my left eye closes when I tighten my lip," he laughs, "so I'm sort of a one-eyed player."

Nowadays, nonetheless looking ahead, he's playing better and more than ever. Ray sometimes tours with Charlie Haden and the Liberation Music Orchestra and, from time to time, he's one of "The Lucifers"—as George Gruntz calls the bones of the Concert Jazz Band. Ray even *raps* on his forthcoming GG-CJB album, *Blues 'n Dues Et Cetera* (Enja), and he's also featured with Dr. John on the sequel to *Bluesiana Triangle*. But mostly he hopes to be working more with his quartet.

Fumio Itabashi plays piano and Dion Parson plays drums in the quartet, joined on *Wishbone* by guest percussionist Don Alias and guest violinist Mark Feldman. "The Gahtooze" opens the album goofy and swinging. "The Gahtooze are those people who've spent an entire week chained to an office desk where they're not happy at all, but now it's Friday night and they've got to have the time of their life. Out where I live on Long Island they're in the Camaros cutting you off on the freeway because they've got to get there and they don't care if they die on the way!"

Mark Helias is a presence throughout and Dion Parson highlights the Caribbean soca of "Ah Soca" and twists "Cheek To Cheek" in 7. "It's very difficult to play that song in 7 because you keep falling off the edge," says Ray. "Duke Ellington's Sound Of Love" by Charles Mingus is a tribute to both.

"The Wishbone Suite" comes as a finale and a hope. It's in three movements, three wishes—for the Earth, for the Folks, for the Spirits. "My wish for the Earth is that folks stop abusing it, that it be able to stand all this mess until folks wake up and get into some harmony. There's some serious disharmony out there. I'm very concerned about ecology and any benefit concert that needs a trombonist I'm available for. My wish for the Folks is that they get together, that they stop thinking of themselves as different species

and realize we're one species. I wish that racism and nationalism would end and that earthism could get going. We're all citizens of the planet. My wish for the Spirits is for the spirit of the earth and the spirit of being. I basically believe that the universe must be unfolding the way it's supposed to. We don't know how it's supposed to unfold, so I wish the spirits will show up and give us some guidance about what we should be doing."

And if a genie were to offer Ray Anderson a fourth wish just for himself? "It's what I've got, really. I've got a family, my wife Jackie, my kids Raven and Annabelle. I'm very lucky. When I sing 'I'm Just A Lucky So And So,' I'm not kidding." **DB**

EQUIPMENT

"I'm playing a brand new Conn 8H trombone, made in 1990. It's right off the shelf. I play the slide that comes with it. I still have a lead pipe from the Brass Lab in New York. I play with a one-of-a-kind mouthpiece someone made for me, but he's not in business and he doesn't want me to publicize it. I use a Fender M1 microphone that clips onto the bell."

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| as a leader | <i>WISHBONE</i> —Gramavision R2 79454 | <i>TWILIGHT TIME</i> —Blue Note BT 85107 |
| <i>WHAT BECAUSE</i> —Gramavision R2 79453 | <i>BLUES BRED IN THE BONE</i> —Gramavision 18-8813 | <i>BORDER TOWN</i> —Blue Note 7-48014 |
| <i>IT JUST SO HAPPENS</i> —Enja 5037 | <i>OLD BOTTLES NEW WINE</i> —Enja 4098 | with various others |
| <i>RIGHT DOWN YOUR ALLEY</i> —Soul Note 1087 | with Mark Helias and Gerry Hemingway | <i>DESERT BLUE</i> —Enja R2 79631 (w/Mark Helias) |
| <i>WOOFERLO</i> —Soul Note 121 187 | with Anthony Braxton | <i>SLICKAPHONICS LIVE</i> —Teldec 26705 (w/Slickaphonics) |
| <i>YOU BE</i> —Moers Music 007 | <i>COMPOSITION 98</i> —hat ART 1984 | <i>THE ANCESTORS</i> —Soul Note 1061 (w/Tim Berne) |
| with George Gruntz | <i>PERFORMANCE 9/1/79</i> —hat ART 2019 | <i>STRAIGHT AHEAD</i> —Enja 50771 (w/Bartora Dennerlein) |
| <i>HAPPENING NOW</i> —hat ART 6008 | with Bennie Wallace | <i>DREAM KEEPER</i> —Blue Note CDP 7 95474 (w/Charlie Haden) |
| <i>FIRST PRIZE</i> —Enja 6004 | <i>SWEETING THROUGH THE CITY</i> —Enja 4078 | <i>THE NEW YORK COMPOSERS ORCHESTRA</i> —New World DIDX 006875 (w/Wayne Horvitz) |
| | | <i>CLAUDE'S LATE MORNING</i> —Gramavision 18-8811 (w/Bobby Previle) |
| | | <i>LIVE IN AN AMERICAN TIME SPIRAL</i> —Soul Note 1049 (w/George Russell) |
| | | <i>ELECTRIC OUTLET</i> —Gramavision 8405 (w/John Scofield) |
| | | <i>SUBJECT TO CHANGE</i> —About Time 1007 (w/Henry Threadgill) |

DOWN BEAT'S 39TH ANNUAL INT'L CRITICS POLL

ALRIGHT, OKAY, YOU WIN

Charlie Haden's new, reconstituted Liberation Music Orchestra. Dizzy Gillespie's United Nation Orchestra. Ellington celebrations and revivals, including the new "classical jazz" phenom. Sun Ra. Lester Bowie's Brass Fantasy. Smoothie George Benson and the Basie Band. Muhal Richard Abrams' large ensemble. The Mingus *Epitaph* band with Gunther Schuller. A Stan Kenton festival (see "Caught" p. 53). I wasn't looking for them, they just jumped out at me. Over the past 12 months, a very convincing case has been made for big, large, "oversized" ensembles in both the U.S. and Europe expressing a stunning array of musical alternatives.

Okay, you say, but big isn't necessarily better. Right. Oscar Peterson was back in a big way with his Grammy-winning quartet called a trio. Mingus Dynasty continues as the best little big band around. Keith Jarrett, with very able support from longtime mates Jack DeJohnette and Gary Peacock, is swinging harder and more eloquently than ever. B.B. King was working both sides of the aisle, with combos and big bands. Also very noteworthy: JB'er saxist Maceo Parker, rocker Neil Young, and world traveler Paul Simon. As for comebacks, Frank Morgan proved that his attitude and style are for real as the sensational headlines became yesterday's news.

In a different vein, certain developments have been afoot to alter the nature and scope of not only certain music categories for our polls, but more implicitly, the way music is being made and perceived. For pollsters and musicians alike, the question is one of electronics and acoustics, technology's impact on the instruments played by not only keyboardists but guitarists, saxophonists, drummers (see "Pro Session" p. 56). For example, in the Acoustic Guitar category, Jim Hall, an electric guitarist, won again over John McLaughlin, someone who plays acoustic guitars electronically, e.g., with transducers, equalizers, and synthesizers. Is it because neither of them play a solid-body? Another example/question: what makes an electric jazz group? This year's winner, John Scofield's band, qualified on the basis of Scofield's hollow-body electric guitar (Hall's format as well). Go figure.

It doesn't always make sense, but it's fun. It's our 39th annual.

—John Ephland

JAZZ ALBUM OF THE YEAR

- 57 **Charlie Haden/Liberation Music Orchestra, *Dream Keeper* [Blue Note]**
- 31 Dave Holland, *Extensions* [ECM]
- 30 Muhal Richard Abrams, *The Hearinga Suite* [Black Saint]
- 29 Randy Weston, *Portraits* [Verve]
- 27 Various Artists, *Epitaph* [Columbia]
- 22 Keith Jarrett, *Tribute* [ECM]
- 18 Art Ensemble of Chicago, *Art Ensemble Of Soweto* [DIW]
- 14 Betty Carter, *Droppin' Things* [Verve]



DONNA PAUL

ROCK ALBUM OF THE YEAR

- 34 **Neil Young & Crazy Horse, *Ragged Glory* [Reprise]**
- 26 Paul Simon, *The Rhythm Of The Saints* [Warner Bros.]
- 25 Sting, *The Soul Cages* [A&M]
- 22 Los Lobos, *The Neighborhood* [Slash/Warner Bros.]
- 19 Van Morrison, *Enlightenment* [Mercury]
- 15 Living Colour, *Time's Up* [Epic]



KEN SETTLE



DAVID GAHR

BLUES ALBUM OF THE YEAR

- 35 **Charles Brown, *All My Life* [Bullseye Blues/Rounder]**
- 31 Cotton/Wells/Bell/Branch, *Harp Attack!* [Alligator]
- 29 Vaughan Brothers, *Family Style* [Epic]
- 22 Albert Collins, *Albert Collins* [Charisma/Pointblank]
- 21 *Blues In The Mississippi Night* [Rykodisc]
- 17 Jeannie & Jimmy Cheatham, *Luv In The Afternoon* [Concord Jazz]



RICHARD LAIRD

R&B/SOUL ALBUM OF THE YEAR

- 33 **Maceo Parker, *Roots Revisited* [Verve]**
- 21 Prince, *Graffiti Bridge* [Paisley Park/Warner Bros.]
- 18 Neville Brothers, *Brother's Keeper* [A&M]
- 18 Was Not Was, *Are You Okay?* [Chrysalis]
- 13 Robert Ward, *Fear No Evil* [Black Top]



PHILIP GOULD

WORLD BEAT ALBUM OF THE YEAR

- 23 **Paul Simon, *The Rhythm Of The Saints* [Warner Bros.]**
- 19 Ali Farka Toure, *The River* [Mango]
- 16 Jon Hassell/City, *Works Of Fiction* [Opal/Warner Bros.]
- 16 Tom Ze, *The Best Of* [Luaka Bop/Warner Bros.]



REISSUE OF THE YEAR

- 81 **Robert Johnson, *The Complete Recordings* [Columbia/Legacy]**
- 79 Roland Kirk, *The Complete Mercury Recordings* [Mercury]
- 57 Charles Mingus, *The Complete Debut Recordings* [Debut]
- 55 Jelly Roll Morton, *Centennial: His Complete Victor Recordings* [RCA/Bluebird]
- 30 Charlie Parker, *The Complete Dean Benedetti Recordings* [Mosaic]
- 23 T-Bone Walker, *The Complete Recordings Of T-Bone Walker, 1940-'54* [Mosaic]
- 19 Various Artists, *Night And Day—The Cole Porter Songbook* [Verve]



Blue Note's Bruce Lundvall with Michael Cuscuna

TERI BLOOM

- TDWR**
Geri Allen
 59 Marcus Roberts
 42 John Hicks
 21 Courtney Pine
 20 Steve Coleman
 19 Roy Hargrove
 18

BLUES ARTIST OF THE YEAR

- 83 B. B. King**
 57 John Lee Hooker
 47 Albert Collins
 41 Stevie Ray Vaughan
 40 Robert Cray



- TDWR**
Joe Louis Walker
 26
 24 Albert Collins
 16 Luther Allison

RECORD LABEL OF THE YEAR

- 102 Blue Note**
 70 RCA/Bluebird/Novus
 53 Mosaic
 48 DIW
 44 Island/Antilles
 44 Polygram

R&B/SOUL ARTIST OF THE YEAR

- 71 Ray Charles**
 41 Prince
 25 Etta James
 25 Aaron Neville

- TDWR**
Maceo Parker
 17 Jimmy Vaughan
 12 Bernie Worrell
 11 Regina Bell



MARK HOLSTON

JAZZ ARTIST OF THE YEAR

- 45 Wynton Marsalis**
 39 Benny Carter
 39 Sonny Rollins
 32 Jackie McLean
 31 Dizzy Gillespie
 30 Cecil Taylor
 25 Henry Threadgill
 24 David Murray

ROCK ARTIST OF THE YEAR

- 42 Paul Simon**
 37 Sting
 22 Elvis Costello
 15 Brian Ferry
 15 Madonna
 14 Eric Clapton



LAURA LEVINE

- TDWR**
Richard Thompson
 17
 13 John Hiatt
 10 Danny Gatton
 10 Chris Thomas



MITCHELL SEIDEL

WORLD BEAT ARTIST OF THE YEAR

- 61 Milton Nascimento**
 37 Youssou N'Dour
 35 Eddie Palmieri
 21 Tito Puente
 21 Ali Farka Toure
 20 Astor Piazzolla
 17 Thomas Mapfumo

- TDWR**
Jerry Gonzalez
 25
 15 Dibo
 12 Trilok Gurtu
 11 Alpha Blondy

COMPOSER

- 85 Henry Threadgill**
 73 Carla Bley
 62 Muhal Richard Abrams
 43 Benny Carter
 37 Abdullah Ibrahim
 31 Toshiko Akiyoshi



TERI BLOOM

Henry Threadgill

- TDWR**
Ed Wilkerson, Jr.
 40
 39 Bobby Watson
 20 Geri Allen
 16 Bobby Previte
 15 Julius Hemphill
 13 Willem Breuker

ARRANGER

- 131 Carla Bley**
 74 Benny Carter
 73 Henry Threadgill
 58 Sun Ra
 48 Frank Foster
 42 Toshiko Akiyoshi

- TDWR**
John Zorn
 37
 27 Bobby Watson
 23 George Gruntz
 22 Willem Breuker
 20 Butch Morris
 17 Frank Foster

PRODUCER

- 158 Michael Cuscuna**
 71 Orrin Keepnews
 55 Giovanni Bonandrini
 55 John Snyder

- TDWR**
Delfeayo Marsalis
 57
 31 John Snyder
 29 Nils Winther

BIG BAND

- 113 Count Basie Orchestra**
 86 Charlie Haden's Liberation Music Orchestra
 58 Akiyoshi/Tabackin
 38 Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra
 33 Dizzy Gillespie's United Nation Orchestra
 26 Gene Harris' Philip Morris Super Band



SIBILA SAVAGE

TDWR

- 43 **Peter Apfelbaum & the Hieroglyphics Ensemble**
- 42 Willem Breuker Kollektief
- 42 Ed Wilkerson's Shadow Vignettes
- 41 George Gruntz Concert Band
- 36 Gene Harris' Philip Morris Super Band
- 33 Either/Orchestra

ACOUSTIC JAZZ GROUP

- 72 **Phil Woods**
- 65 Wynton Marsalis Septet
- 55 World Saxophone Quartet
- 51 Art Ensemble of Chicago
- 46 Henry Threadgill's Very Very Circus



FRANK OCKENFELS

TDWR

- 64 **Harper Brothers**
- 31 Bobby Watson & Horizon
- 23 8 Bold Souls
- 23 Dirty Dozen Brass Band
- 20 29th St. Saxophone Quartet

ELECTRIC JAZZ GROUP

- 99 **John Scofield Group**
- 96 Ornette Coleman & Prime Time
- 64 Miles Davis
- 44 Pat Metheny/Roy Haynes/Dave Holland
- 41 Bill Frisell
- 31 Yellowjackets
- 27 Chick Corea's Elektric Band

TDWR

- 35 **Steve Coleman & Five Elements**
- 27 Ronald Shannon Jackson
- 26 Naked City
- 24 Curlew

BLUES GROUP

- 60 **Kinsey Report**
- 58 B. B. King
- 39 Roomful of Blues
- 29 Albert Collins & the Icebreakers
- 29 Robert Cray



TDWR

- 26 **Lil' Ed & the Blues Imperials**
- 20 Holmes Brothers
- 17 Little Charlie & the Nightcats
- 15 Saffire—The Uppity Blues Women

ROCK GROUP

- 46 **Living Colour**
- 32 Rolling Stones
- 22 Los Lobos
- 22 Neil Young & Crazy Horse
- 22 Sonic Youth

TDWR

- 18 **Fishbone**
- 17 French/Frith/Kaiser/Thompson
- 16 Living Colour
- 15 Ambitious Lovers
- 15 NRBQ

R&B/SOUL GROUP

- 93 **Neville Brothers**
- 58 Ray Charles Orchestra
- 37 Dirty Dozen Brass Band
- 26 Etta James Band

TDWR

- 25 **J. B. Horns**
- 22 Dirty Dozen Brass Band
- 21 Rebirth Brass Band

WORLD BEAT GROUP

- 39 **Mahlathini & the Mahotella Queens**
- 29 Jerry Gonzalez & the Fort Apache Band
- 24 Ladysmith Black Mambazo
- 24 Tito Puente
- 16 Youssou N'Dour
- 15 Loketo

TDWR

- 24 **Jerry Gonzalez & the Fort Apache Band**
- 21 Mahlathini & the Mahotella Queens
- 16 Youssou N'Dour
- 11 Kassav

TRUMPET

- 107 **Wynton Marsalis**
- 93 Lester Bowie
- 79 Tom Harrell
- 79 Clark Terry
- 50 Don Cherry
- 47 Dizzy Gillespie
- 44 Miles Davis



TERI BLOOM

ALTO SAXOPHONE

- 123 **Frank Morgan**
- 102 Jackie McLean
- 100 Phil Woods
- 66 Ornette Coleman
- 61 Benny Carter
- 54 Bobby Watson

TDWR

- 84 **Bobby Watson**
- 65 Vincent Herring
- 54 Steve Coleman
- 46 Kenny Garrett
- 35 Greg Osby
- 32 Christopher Hollyday

TENOR SAXOPHONE

- 141 **Sonny Rollins**
- 93 Stan Getz
- 80 David Murray
- 62 Joe Henderson
- 53 Branford Marsalis



TDWR

- 91 **Joe Lovano**
- 60 Ralph Moore
- 33 Gary Thomas
- 31 Courtney Pine
- 22 Von Freeman
- 22 Craig Handy

BARITONE SAXOPHONE

- 140 **Hamiet Bluiett**
- 81 Nick Brignola
- 51 John Surman
- 41 Ronnie Cuber
- 23 Cecil Payne
- 22 Howard Johnson

TDWR

- 52 **John Surman**
- 41 Howard Johnson
- 40 Glenn Wilson
- 32 Peter Brötzmann
- 25 Nick Brignola
- 25 Gary Smulyan

TROMBONE

- 175 **Ray Anderson**
- 132 J.J. Johnson
- 95 Steve Turre
- 52 Craig Harris
- 38 Curtis Fuller

TDWR

- 57 **Robin Eubanks**
- 44 Frank Lacy
- 31 Craig Harris
- 25 Fred Wesley
- 24 George Lewis

CLARINET

- 144 **John Carter**
88 Buddy DeFranco
78 Eddie Daniels
75 Alvin Batiste
46 Kenny Davern
35 Phil Woods



TERI BLOOM

TDWR

- 77 **Don Byron**
55 Ken Peplowski
32 Tony Coe
29 Mwata Bowden
23 Dr. Michael White

FLUTE

- 131 **James Newton**
107 James Moody
83 Lew Tabackin
77 Frank Wess
36 Henry Threadgill

TDWR

- 34 **Kent Jordan**
31 Sam Rivers
27 Gary Thomas
27 Henry Threadgill
25 Dave Valentin



VIBES

- 202 **Milt Jackson**
165 Bobby Hutcherson
110 Gary Burton
48 Lionel Hampton
44 Jay Hoggard

TDWR

- 73 **Steve Nelson**
66 Jay Hoggard
48 Khan Jamal
34 Terry Gibbs
33 Karl Berger

ACOUSTIC PIANO

- 87 **Cecil Taylor**
82 Tommy Flanagan
51 Kenny Barron
50 John Hicks
49 Keith Jarrett
44 Don Pullen
37 Oscar Peterson
37 McCoy Tyner



HYOU VIELZ

TDWR

- 77 **Geri Allen**
45 Mulgrew Miller
30 Marcus Roberts
26 Myra Melford
24 James Williams
23 Marilyn Crispell
22 Geoff Keezer

ORGAN

- 134 **Jimmy Smith**
83 Jimmy McGriff
57 Jack McDuff
56 Charles Earland
38 Sun Ra
33 Carla Bley
27 Barbara Dennerlein
20 Joey DeFrancesco

TDWR

- 91 **Barbara Dennerlein**
62 Don Pullen
60 Joey DeFrancesco
48 Amina Claudine Myers
24 John Patton



TERI BLOOM

SYNTHESIZER

- 90 **Sun Ra**
84 Joe Zawinul
50 Herbie Hancock
45 Wayne Horvitz
39 Chick Corea

TDWR

- 37 **John Surman**
33 Lyle Mays
32 Wayne Horvitz
27 Pete Levin



TERI BLOOM

VIOLIN

- 107 **Stephane Grappelli**
85 Billy Bang
82 Leroy Jenkins
48 John Blake

TDWR

- 39 **Terry Jenoure**
38 Claude Williams
28 Svend Asmussen
28 Billy Bang

DRUMS

- 107 **Max Roach**
94 Jack DeJohnette
78 Billy Higgins
66 Elvin Jones
43 Tony Williams
38 Ed Blackwell

TDWR

- 58 **Marvin "Smitty" Smith**
51 Ralph Peterson
50 Victor Lewis
42 Jeff "Tain" Watts
38 Kenny Washington

ACOUSTIC GUITAR

- 104 **Jim Hall**
92 John McLaughlin
63 Joe Pass
54 Kenny Burrell

TDWR

- 28 **Egberto Gismonti**
26 Fareed Haque
24 Howard Alden
24 Bireli Lagrene

ELECTRIC GUITAR

- 161 **John Scofield**
127 Bill Frisell
75 Pat Metheny
47 Kenny Burrell
45 Jim Hall
21 John Abercrombie

TDWR

- 29 **Kevin Eubanks**
29 **Sonny Sharrock**
25 Marc Ribot
24 Howard Alden
23 Mark Whitfield
19 Mike Stern

ACOUSTIC BASS

- 161 **Charlie Haden**
141 Dave Holland
76 Ray Brown
52 Milt Hinton
34 Rufus Reid
33 Ray Drummond
25 Ron Carter

TDWR

- 61 **Ray Drummond**
35 Michael Formanek
32 Charnett Moffett
31 Anthony Cox
29 Marc Johnson
25 Cecil McBee

ELECTRIC BASS

- 173 **Steve Swallow**
54 Jamaaladeen Tacuma
37 Bob Cranshaw
32 Marcus Miller

TDWR

- 27 **Bill Laswell**
25 Gerald Veasley
23 Fred Frith
21 John Patitucci

PERCUSSION

- 91 **Nana Vasconcelos**
81 Tito Puente
78 Airta Moriera
77 Famoudou Don Moye
30 Trilok Gurtu

TDWR

- 39 **Jerry Gonzalez**
36 Marilyn Mazur
32 Trilok Gurtu
31 Poncho Sanchez
27 Glen Velez



JAMES MOORE

MISCELLANEOUS INSTRUMENT

- 118 **Toots Thielemans (harmonica)**
75 Bob Stewart (tuba)
66 Howard Johnson (tuba)
45 Astor Piazzolla (badoneon)
37 Diedre Murray (cello)
33 David Murray (bass clarinet)

TDWR

- 36 **Steve Turre (conch shells)**
30 Diedre Murray (cello)
27 Hank Roberts (cello)



TERI BLOOM

MALE JAZZ SINGER

- 136 Joe Williams
84 Bobby McFerrin
81 Jon Hendricks
80 Mel Tormé
58 Mark Murphy

TDWR

- 36 Harry Connick, Jr.
32 David Frishberg
16 Jon Hendricks
16 Mark Murphy

MALE SINGER
(non-jazz)

- 72 Aaron Neville
46 Frank Sinatra
45 Milton Nascimento
21 Peter Gabriel
20 Al Jarreau

TDWR

- 27 Harry Connick, Jr.
18 Lyle Lovett
18 Junior Wells
16 Dr. John

FEMALE JAZZ SINGER

- 164 Betty Carter
124 Carmen McRae
89 Sheila Jordan
70 Shirley Horn
64 Abbey Lincoln
58 Ella Fitzgerald



MARK MILLER

TDWR

- 72 Cassandra Wilson
50 Shirley Horn
41 Sheila Jordan
28 Abbey Lincoln
23 Meredith D'Ambrosio

FEMALE SINGER (non-jazz)

- 71 Aretha Franklin
41 Joni Mitchell
36 Ruth Brown
27 Bonnie Raitt
16 Anita Baker

TDWR

- 19 Tracy Chapman
17 Sinead O'Connor
16 Rosanne Cash

VOCAL JAZZ GROUP

- 127 Take 6
85 Hendricks Family
78 Manhattan Transfer
42 Jackie & Roy
21 New York Voices

TDWR

- 27 New York Voices
27 Sweet Honey in the Rock
22 Hendricks Family
21 Ladysmith Black Mambazo

THE CRITICS

Following is a list of critics who voted in DB's 39th annual International Critics Poll. Eighty-four critics voted this year, distributing 10 points among up to three choices (no more than five votes per choice) in each of two categories: Established Talent and Talent Deserving Wider Recognition (TDWR). The participants were:

Frank Alkyer: editorial director, DB.

Jon Andrews: DB.

Chuck Berg: DB; *Jazz Educators Journal*; Lawrence [KS] *Journal-World*.

Larry Birnbaum: DB.

Fred Bouchard: DB correspondent [Boston]; *JazzTimes*; *Quincy Point Journal*; WMBR.

Michael Bourne: DB; *The American Jazz Radio Festival*; *Hennessey Jazz Notes*; *Jazz Journal*; WBGO-FM [Newark].

Pawel Browdowski: editor, *Jazz Forum* [Poland].

Scott Brown: WNOP [Cincinnati].

Chris Colombi Jr.: DB correspondent [Cleveland]; *Cleveland Crusader*; WERE.

Thomas Conrad: contributing editor, *CD Review*.

Owen Cordle: DB; *JazzTimes*; *Raleigh News & Observer*.

Joe Cuniff: DB.

Paul de Barros: *Earshot Jazz*; *Seattle Times*.

Chip Deffaa: *New York Post*; author, *Swing Legacy, Voices Of The Jazz Age*.

Jim De Jong: DB correspondent [Chicago].

Lauren Deutsch: DB.

John Dillberto: host/pro-

ducer, *Echoes* [NPR].

Len Dobbin: host, *Jazz 96* [Montreal]; photographer.

Bill Douthart: DB.

Jose Duarte: Portuguese radio, press, television.

Lofton Emmeri III: *Chicago Citizen*; WHPK-FM.

Dan Emerson: *Request*; *Minneapolis Star Tribune*.

Gudrun Endress: editor, *Jazz Podium* [Germany]; Radio SDR [Stuttgart].

John Ephland: managing editor, DB.

J.B. Figi: program committee, Chicago Jazz Festival.

Lona Foote: DB; photographer; independent arts facilitator.

Maurizio Franco: *Musica Jazz* [Italy].

Jack Fuller: editor, *Chicago Tribune*.

Gerard Futrick: *Coda*.

Robert Gaspar: *Jazziz*; *Hartford* [Conn.] *Advocate*; *Coda*.

Elaine Guregian: DB; *Akron Beacon Journal*.

Frank-John Hadley: DB; *Jazziz*; *Living Blues*.

Michael Handler: DB correspondent [San Francisco]; jazz video producer.

Dave Helland: teen editor, DB.

Patrick Henry: *DBA Jazz*; KCSM; KSDS.

Geoffrey Himes: *Washington Post*; *Patuxent Newspapers*.

Eugene Holley, Jr.: program director, WCLK [Atlanta].

Randi Hultin: DB correspondent [Norway]; *Jazz Forum*; *Jazz Journal*.

Willard Jenkins: exec. dir., National Jazz Service Organi-

zation; *JazzTimes*; *Jazz Forum*.

Niranjan Jhaveri: producer, Jazz Yatra festivals.

Gene Kalbacher: publisher, *Hot House*; columnist, *CMJ*; *New Music Report*.

Leigh Kamman: *The Jazz Image* [Minnesota Public Radio].

Peter Kostakis: DB.

Art Lange: DB; *Fanfare*.

John Litweiler: *Chicago Reader*; *Chicago Tribune*; author, *The Freedom Principle*.

Jaap Lüdeke: AVRO Radio [Netherlands].

Lars Lystedt: DB correspondent [Sweden]; *Orkester Journalen*.

John McDonough: DB; *Wall St. Journal*.

Jim Macnie: Happy Boy Enterprises.

Howard Mandel: DB.

Terry Martin: Jazz Institute of Chicago Archive.

Bill Milkowski: DB; *Guitar Player*; *Pulse!*; *Guitar World*.

Dan Morgenstern: director, Institute of Jazz Studies [Rutgers U.].

Michael G. Nastos: DB correspondent [Detroit]; *Cadence*; *Ann Arbor News*; WEMU-FM [Ypsilanti, MI].

Dan Ouellette: DB; *Strings*; *Acoustic Guitar*; *San Francisco Bay Guardian*.

Michael Point: DB; *Pulse!*; *Austin American-Statesman*.

Marc PoKempner: DB.

Jon W. Poses: *Audio*; *Stereophile*; *Columbia* (MO) *Daily Tribune*.

Doug Ramsey: author, *Jazz Matters*.

Ebet Roberts: photographer.

Jim Roberts: editor, *Bass*

Player.

Robert D. Rusch: editor, *Cadence*.

Ben Sandmel: DB; *Elle*.

Gene Santoro: DB.

Wayne Self: DB; program organizer, Mid-America Arts Alliance.

Chris Sheridan: DB; author, *Count Basie: A Bio-Discography*.

Bill Shoemaker: DB; *JazzTimes*.

Joel Simpson: DB correspondent [New Orleans].

Jack Sohmer: jazz writer/musician; DB; *JazzTimes*; *The Mississippi Rag*.

Stephanie Stein: DB.

Andrew Sussman: *Fanfare*.

Ron Sweetman: CKCU-FM [Ottawa].

Robin Tolleson: DB; drummer; playground hoopster.

Marc Weidenbaum: associate editor, *Pulse!*

Norm Weinstein: *Disc Respect*; *East West Journal*; author, *A Night In Tunisia, Imagination Of Africa In Jazz*.

Ron Welburn: DB; *JazzTimes*.

Barry Winograd: WXRT [Chicago].

Russell Woessner: DB correspondent [Philadelphia]; *Philadelphia City Paper*.

Carlo Wolff: *Billboard*; *Boston Globe*; *Cleveland Plain Dealer*.

Josef Woodard: DB; *Musican*.

Scott Yanow: DB; *JazzTimes*; *Jazziz*; *Cadence*; *Jazz Link*.

Shoichi Yui: jazz critic.

Rafi Zabor: duc d'Alembert.

Mike Zwerin: *International Herald Tribune* [Paris].

Trippin' The Brass Fantastic

LESTER BOWIE

By Wayne K. Self

What gives?

Trumpeter Lester Bowie is a stalwart charter member of the cutting-edge Art Ensemble of Chicago, versatile artistic collaborator with folks from drummer Jack DeJohnette to soul singer Fontella Bass to choreographer Blondell Cummings, and leader of the horn-heavy Brass Fantasy. So what's he doing recording Top 40 hits like "Personality," "My Way," "Papa's Got A Brand New Bag," "Thriller," "Da Butt," and "Saving All My Love For You"? These from the man who composed and performed "Jazz Death" (from the early Art Ensemble's *Congluptious*), and from the group that recorded the eloquent Ellington homage, "Duke's Fantasy," and the adventurous "Twilight Dreams" (both from the latter-named '88 Venture release), not to mention its recent, stunning explorations of Billie Holiday's work . . .

Before his mid-60s encounter with Chicago's Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM), Bowie spent several years working rhythm & blues, bebop, and carnival gigs (see DB, March '84). The AACM's philosophy of "moving music forward with knowledgeable experimentation and respect for artistic individuality" launched him into new worlds. He became its second president (following founding father, pianist/composer Muhal

*"The music that we do—
with any group I'm involved with—
is intended to
stimulate thought, period."*

*"Something really
must be fishy
if Brass Fantasy's
not working in America.
You can't get no more
American than
Brass Fantasy!"*



Richard Abrams), then joined visionary saxophonist/composer Roscoe Mitchell and theatrical fellow-reedsman Joseph Jarman, bassist Malachi Maghostut Favors, and percussion master Famoudou Don Moye to barnstorm Europe as the AEC.

A thread connecting his aesthetic pursuits is the concept of "Great Black Music: From the Ancient to the Future." This slogan, first adopted in the late '70s by the Art Ensemble, succinctly defines the foundation upon which Bowie draws his inspiration. Bowie is about inclusion; his quest is to create with as many variations of black music—jazz, blues, r & b, and gospel—as possible.

"The really significant thing is that all of these different types of music come from the same simple source," Bowie muses. "It's like a giant tree and each one of the branches is a motherf**ker!"

Brass Fantasy funnels Great Black Music through a lineup of four trumpets, two trombones, a french horn, tuba, percussion, and trap drums. Bowie draws upon an array of brass and drum players who outfit the ensemble for studio or stage. On a recent outing at the 18th International Association of Jazz Educators convention in Washington, D.C., the Brass featured mainstays Vincent Chancey on french horn, Bob Stewart on tuba, and Famoudou's percussions. The trumpet trio included E.J. Allen, Gerald Brazel, and Byron Stripling (Stripling substituting for Stanton Davis, with Earl Garner as another sit-in favorite); trombonists Clark Gayton and Bowie's younger brother Joseph (both sitting in for Frank Lacy and Steve Turre), and drummer Vinnie Johnson (subbing for Ken Crutchfield).

Brass immediately launched into an energetic rendition of "Night Time (Is The Right Time)," a raucous, good-timey propulsion of potent call-and-response harmonies. Sade's "Smooth Operator" unleashed Bowie's bag of full-throated vibrato twists,

smears, and half-valved runs attacking a melodious wall of sound. His stunning interpretations of two Billie Holiday ballads (featured on Brass Fantasy's *Serious Fun*) were the highlights of a spirited presentation. Bowie led an atmospheric "God Bless The Child" by alternating solo lines on trumpet between a chest-level straight microphone and an echo-effect waist-high mic for added impact. Then Bowie summoned forth the aural specter of a lynching, the sound of weighted rope stretched over a tree limb on a chilly, windy midnight, gradually coalescing the remaining horn voices into a nobly mournful "Strange Fruit" filled with sadness yet climaxing as a statement of dignified rage. In the best New Orleans tradition in a 1990s mode, Brass Fantasy took the go-go music of E.U.'s "Da Butt" to even funkier lows, culminating in a march through the audience during "The Great Pretender."

You take pieces and redo them," Bowie remarks. "This is one of the main traditions and essentials in jazz: to be able to take materials from various sources and apply so-called jazz techniques—alterations and extensions of the structure—and use them as a vehicle for improvisation. One of the essentials of jazz is to be able to take material from varied sources and give it new meaning, new life.

"For instance, the thing that Billie Holiday went through singing 'Strange Fruit,' that lynching scene—trying to feel and express that—and then try to do it with just horns . . . it's not easy. We have to try to capture that meaning and that feeling in our time."

Lofty enough goals when it's about the quintessential Billie, but what about take-offs of James Brown tunes "Papa's Got A Brand New Bag" and "I Got You"? Sure, they're both classic rhythm & blues cuts, but Michael Jackson's "Thriller"?

"We're using the same source of material but we're adding our personality," Bowie declares. "The only way for me to do something with the song was to make it, at least hopefully, equally as powerful or musical a statement using that same material. You take the song and add your piece to it."

Concerned that Brass Fantasy has not been taken seriously by the critics and is generally ignored by U.S. jazz presenters, Bowie wonders why the group hasn't been acknowledged for a steadfast pursuit of its idiosyncratic direction: that of blending the popularly modern mainstream with a decidedly abstract musical conception. But he refuses to allow acclaim, or a lack of it, to determine his course.

Being one who believes in showing over telling, Bowie has his philosophical approach on how to bring younger players and the next generation of jazz supporters along.



Although he's done Yale University and Dartmouth College residencies and been a visiting faculty member at New York City's New School, Bowie would rather demonstrate by playing . . . or maybe go motorcycling or fishing to "recharge the batteries."

"You make the bridge by just burnin'! That's how you make the bridge [to young people]," Bowie says. "Whatever you're doing, if you're gettin' down, the young people are going to dig it, you understand? All they gotta do is be exposed to it.

"I never had so many young people come up to me—after that concert in D.C.—saying, 'Damn, we don't know what that was but y'all was jammin'!' Not just young or old; anyone understands it if you do it right. You don't have to try to get a gimmick or a bridge to them; you're making the music that reaches them. But I don't want to try a rap thing to show that I'm trying to make this bridge to the young people. The young people—*people*—have to reach for this music. They *should* reach. They've got to *want* to know what this is. They've got to have some kind of desire to reach for it. And then, when they do that, that's when we make the connection."

Bowie observes that Brass Fantasy has yet to make the DB Critics Poll. Due to



MITCHELL SEIDEL

undiminished European enthusiasm for the group, along with the number of players in it who have placed prominently in the Poll over the past two years (trombonists Steve Turre and Frank Lacy, percussionist Moye, tuba master Bob Stewart, and Bowie, who won the 1990 trumpet category), can this be the occasional case of the sum being lesser than its parts?

"Something really must be fishy if Brass Fantasy's not working in America," Bowie notes while indicating a busy 1991 European touring schedule in contrast to the handful of domestic dates. "I mean, anybody that has ever seen us here, they can't believe it! You can't get no more American than Brass Fantasy!"

Despite his concern, Bowie stays the path. He and the Art Ensemble's *Soweto* release in '90 featured the Amabutho Male Chorus, a South African vocal quintet with whom Bowie plans to record again. Plus, other new releases on the DIW label currently include Brass Fantasy's *Serious Fun* and a collaborative effort between the Brass and the Art Ensemble, *Live At The 8th Tokyo Music Joy '90*. Most of the group's recordings on the Japanese DIW have just begun hitting the American

market with distribution by the New Jersey-based Sphere Marketing.

Bowie has also recently been commissioned to compose the music for choreographer Blondell Cummings' dedication to the legendary Josephine Baker titled *For J.B.* A promising arrangement if Julius Hemphill's sax sextet's fine musical contribution to the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company's *Last Supper At Uncle Tom's Cabin/The Promised Land* is an indicator.

If anything, Bowie's work impels him to assert his vision even stronger. Since he's begun doing productions with up to 40 people, his dream projects are taking on

humongous proportions, 500-to-800 or 900-piece ensembles involving a lot of people. Big dreams, indeed.

"It's the involvement in spreading the message. It gives you that much more strength when you can get 1,000 musicians together and play something together that's innovative, that's happening, and it's making a sound that's never been heard before. That shows the *people* can do that. And our possibilities, if we really get our thing together and work together and help each other out—not just black people but *people*, period—if we ever get that happening and we wake up, we can do just unbelievable things! And we're about illustrating that."

Which leads to some bones Bowie has to pick in return. He's not impressed with the neo-bop sound emanating from the new wave of young jazz instrumentalists. Their mission, it seems, is to spark a renaissance of '40s-era bop, the music inspiring them to discover the secret of balancing emotion, thought, and technical mastery. Bowie feels that their emulation amounts to mere imitation. He thinks they're falling short as jazz artists by not speaking in their own unique voices through the music being interpreted.

"We can't be satisfied with how far we've come, because we ain't went nowhere!" Bowie exclaims. "Why should we stop developing this music [in a way] that'll stop it from reaching [one] emotionally? I can't sit back and just start doing some shit that was done 30 or 40 years ago in hopes that it'll suffice . . . 'cause it won't suffice; this is 1991, man!"

"Of course," he concludes, "I want to reach everyone, but I want to show young people some intelligence, too. We will never give up until everyone understands." **DB**

EQUIPMENT

Bowie plays a Burbank trumpet and a Kansthal flugelhorn, both handmade instruments. He has no particular mouthpiece

preference, relying first on comfort and, secondly, what's available.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader

ALL THE MAGIC!—ECM 23799-1J
THE GREAT PRETENDER—ECM 829 369

with Brass Fantasy

LIVE AT THE 8TH TOKYO MUSIC JOY '90—DIW 842
MY WAY—DIW 835
SERIOUS FUN—DIW 834
TWILIGHT DREAMS—Venture 90650

with Art Ensemble of Chicago

ART ENSEMBLE OF CHICAGO SOWETO—DIW 837

with various others

CONGLIPTIOUS—Nessa 2 (w/Roscoe Mitchell)
NEW DIRECTIONS—ECM 829 374 (w/Jack DeJohnette)
OTHER AFTERNOONS—Allinity 34 (w/Jimmy Lyons)
FRESH—Arista/Freedom 1015 (w/Frankie Lowe)

If Notes Were Oranges

CARLOS SANTANA

By Dan Ouellette

At this year's Bay Area Grammy Nominees Party, hosted by the blues & roots nightclub Slim's, the San Francisco chapter of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (NARAS) awarded guitarist/bandleader Carlos Santana its MVP Award for outstanding creative and artistic contributions. Concert promoter Bill Graham introduced Carlos, acknowledging his stellar musical career and praising his social concerns: "No matter where he goes, whether it's Ghana, Yugoslavia, Moscow, Norway, or Japan, audiences always move their pelvic bones to his uplifting, joyous spiritual music. And whenever I need a recognizable name to headline a benefit concert, I always call on him and he responds, 'Just tell me where and when.'"

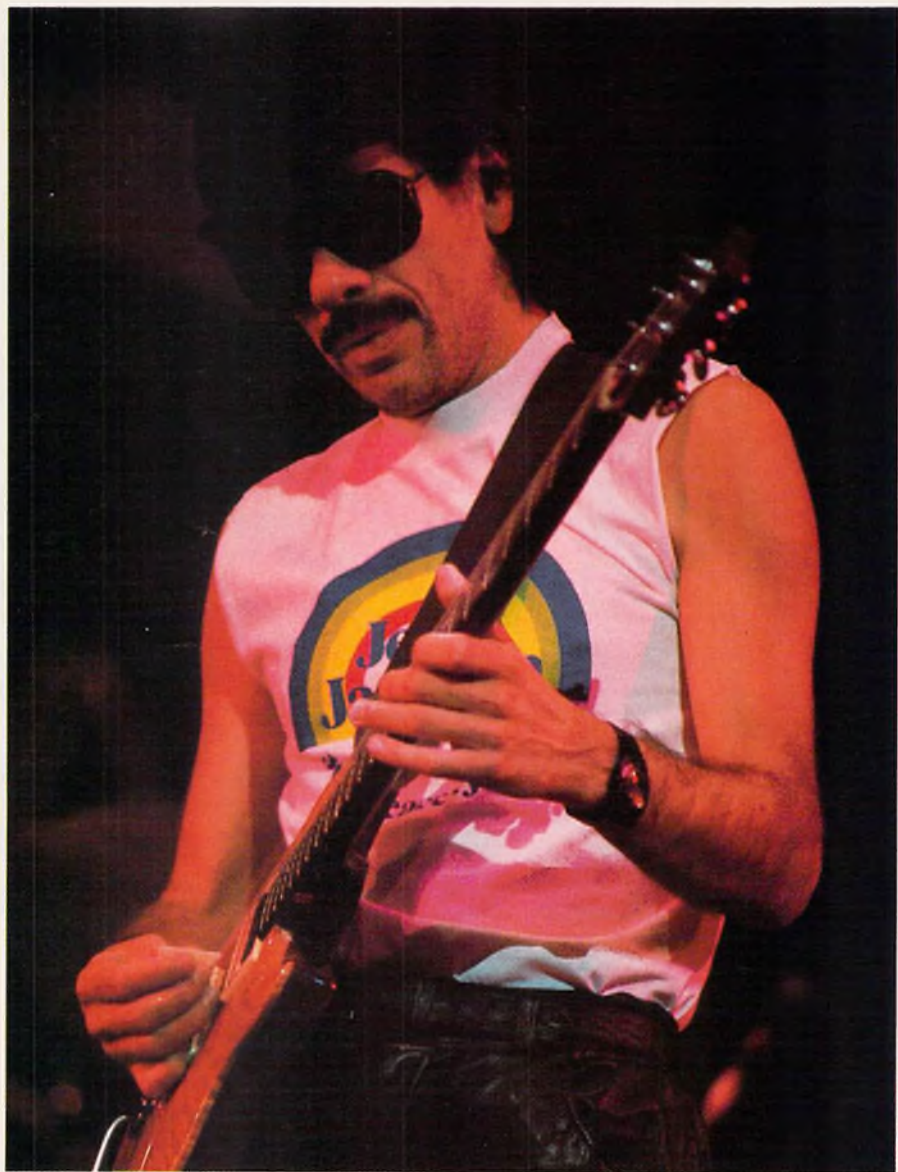
The 44-year-old Santana has recorded over 30 albums, nine of which have gone platinum and 16 gold. He has collaborated with many of the great musicians of the past three decades, including, most recently, blues legend John Lee Hooker and hard-rocking Living Colour guitar ace Vernon Reid. In this, his band's silver anniversary year, Santana continues to tour internationally to sold-out houses, and his impressive 1973 live double album *Lotus*, inspired by Miles Davis' *Bitches Brew* and previously available only as a Japanese import, has finally been issued domestically (see "Reviews" July '91).

Given such a varied musical background, how has he managed to survive and thrive as a musician in the competitive music industry, where the latest "superstars" are

routinely marketed as commodities? "I'm very good at really getting at a note and, like an orange, cutting it in half and squeezing all the juice out of it," he explained as we talked in his cathedral-ceilinged guest house north of San Francisco, a house filled with old concert photos and African artwork. "Our music continues to be tremendously appealing to all kinds of people— young, old, black, white, hip, square—and all cultures, whether it's in Israel where the Hebrews and Palestinians both like us or in Japan where we have a big following. It has to do with the simplicity and soul of my music. I don't deliberately try to make it appealing to lots of different audiences. I'm not trying to sell Carlos Santana. I don't even know how to sell Carlos Santana. I hear guitar players who know a zillion riffs and they play at blistering speeds. But I just try to get to that next note, to get inside it

so the listener can do the same."

Santana admitted that his music has received less and less airplay over the years, but reasoned, "I don't need to get my music on the radio. Let some act like Vanilla Ice be on the radio, because radio more often than not gives music a bad name anyway. It takes the McDonald's approach to music. But then, I have problems with the whole way the music industry is run today, how it's so impersonal from the producers to the marketing geniuses, as they call themselves, to the presidents of record companies. As for most of the musicians, if you put them in front of a Macys with a guitar and they had to sing for their living, they'd starve because no one would pay to hear what they're really like. That's why I listen to Bob Marley and John Coltrane. Their music was never for sale. It's music like that of a bird singing in the morning. Fortunately, you



KEN FRANKLING

*"I'm very good at really getting at a note and,
like an orange, cutting it in half
and squeezing all the juice out of it."*



can't put a price on it."

Still an impassioned and eloquent performer over two decades since the release of his debut album, *Santana*, which has sold over four million copies, Carlos contends that longevity and musical integrity go hand in hand. He subscribes to a work ethic of getting "to the heart of a song, expressing it to its maximum potential, whether it's 'La Cucaracha,' 'Louie, Louie,' or 'Love Supreme.' That's how I was taught. I play music because I know it can elevate the spirit, because it has the power to build the bridge of love between people. It speaks more clearly than passports or nationalities or religions or caste systems. Music can break down borders and divisions. I believe Western music helped to break down the Berlin Wall. Musicians can be healers more so than politicians, senators, presidents, or generals. That's why Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington were called peace ambassadors."

Central to Santana's career has been his active participation in performing benefit concerts for a wide array of social and political causes. In addition to helping organize the 1988 "Blues For Salvador" Oakland benefit concert that raised \$100,000 for the children of El Salvador, he played the "Live Aid" benefit at JFK Stadium in Philadelphia in 1985 and headlined the final show of the first Amnesty International tour the following year. Carlos credits promoter Bill Graham. "He's a true brother and friend. He feels a big concert is not complete without me. For example, when he took a group of musicians to play Russia in 1987, he said, 'Carlos, I want you to come. The Doobies, Bonnie Raitt, and James Taylor will be playing, but you represent the biggest cross section of America, not a Billy Joel or a Bruce Springsteen.' Bill has always told our group that we were a mini-United Nations because we were so racially integrated with Latinos, blacks, and whites."

In addition to a rigorous traveling schedule that has already included stops this year in Brazil, Europe, Africa, and across the States, Santana is organizing a massive benefit concert in 1992 to honor Native Americans. He sees it as an alternative to the festivities commemorating the 500-year anniversary of Christopher Columbus' arri-

val in America. Carlos says he wants to give Native Americans exposure to address social and political issues. He hopes to enlist the help of the Grateful Dead, the Neville Brothers, Willie Nelson, and Harry Belafonte, among others. "I'd love to have Quincy Jones close the concert by singing Bob Marley's 'Buffalo Soldier,'" Santana said, adding, "I'm only interested in billing musicians of conscience, such as Stevie Wonder, who stuck by his guns to get Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday a national holiday. When the replicas of the Niña, Pinta, and Santa Maria come sailing through San Francisco's Golden Gate on October 12, 1992, we'll have our own celebration and call it '500 Years of Surviving Columbus.'"

How does Santana successfully manage to balance art, politics, and spirituality in his music? "Actually, it's not so much politics as it is consciousness," he responded. "And since consciousness and spirituality are essentially the same thing, it comes down to a melding of art and consciousness. I want my music to clue my listeners into something beyond the song itself. For example, this guy who had considered suicide wrote me a letter. He had seen the video of John Lee Hooker and me performing 'The

Healer,' and it inspired him to seek another way of dealing with his problems. Now that's more important to me than how many Grammys I get or how much money I could make selling Pepsi."

Even though he's won dozens of awards and has sold millions of albums, Santana contends that he's still learning from his peers. "Whenever I go to Chicago, I get a call from Buddy Guy, who tells me that Otis Rush is waiting for me. So I go jam with them and they beat me up just the same as they do Eric Clapton and Robert Cray. They beat all of us up because they're the first fountains. If you play with Albert King or B.B. King, you're gonna get beat up, but you'll also come up with some licks you would never get if you wimp out, stay at home, and try to learn from records. You get the real tonic, the real substance of music when you play with the greats. I tape all my jams and then go home to try and figure out ways of not getting beat up the next time I play."

When I commented that the process sounded like a true battle of the bands, Santana replied, "Well, it's not quite like football. We don't hurt each other's feet. The ultimate goal is to complement each other. I'm not into dueling guitars, but when you go into those funky blues clubs you'd better be prepared to get scratched. It's like the greats pull a switchblade on you. The last time Buddy Guy came to the area he invited me to play with him. But before I got on stage, he sang, 'Just because it's your hometown, don't think you're gonna put me down.' He was fooling around, but he was also serious. But I love it because that's how I continue to learn."

DB

EQUIPMENT

Carlos Santana uses three custom-made Paul Reed Smith guitars, which are virtually the same except for small details. All three are strung with D'Addarios in standard gauge sets (.009, .011, .016, .024, .032, .042). For different guitar effects, he uses three amps. For the inimitable Santana lead solo sound, there's a Mesa Boogie Mark 1 Power Amp with old Altec 417 series speakers in a Mesa Boogie 1 x 12 cabinet. The other amps are the Mesa Boogie Quad Pre-Amp with Electro-Voice speakers in a Mesa Boogie 4 x 12 cabinet and the Marshall 100-watt Series 100 amp loaded with Celestion speakers also in a Mesa Boogie 4 x 12 cabinet. To enable him to select each amp

separately, Santana employs a pedalboard that has an old Muir Wah pedal and a custom-selector box made by Matt Biachi for EMB Associates.

Santana guitar technician Ed Adair reports that even though Carlos uses various stomp boxes for additional effects, he doesn't use any rack-mount effects or any processing equipment that could get in the way of a true guitar sound coming straight through the amps.

As for guitar picks, Santana recently bought the last 4000 Yamaha GP-37 large triangles in the world during a trip to Japan.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

Carlos Santana solo

BLUES FOR SALVADOR—Columbia CK 40875
HAVANA MOON—Columbia CK 38642
ILLUMINATIONS (w/Alice Coltrane)—Columbia PC 32900
LOVE DEVOTION SURRENDER (w/John McLaughlin)—Columbia CK 32034
LIVE (w/Buddy Miles)—Columbia KC 31308

Santana Band

SPIRITS DANCING IN THE FLESH—Columbia CK 46065

VIVA SANTANA!—Columbia C2K 44344
FREEDOM—Columbia CK 40272
ZEBOP!—Columbia CK 37158
MOONFLOWER—Columbia CK 24914
LOTUS—Columbia C2K 46764
BORBOLETTA—Columbia CK 33135
CARAVANSERAI—Columbia CK 31610
SANTANA III—Columbia CK 30595
ABRAXAS—Columbia CK 30130
SANTANA—Columbia CK 9781

Key

Excellent	★★★★★
Very Good	★★★★
Good	★★★
Fair	★★
Poor	★



Henry Threadgill Very Very Circus

SPIRITS OF NUFF . . . NUFF—Black Saint 120134-2: *HOPE A HOPE A; UNREALISTIC LOVE; DRIVIN' YOU SLOW AND CRAZY; BEE DEE AFF; FIRST CHURCH OF THIS; EXACTO; IN THE RING.* (58:12 minutes)

Personnel: Threadgill, alto sax, flute; Curtis Fowlkes, trombone; Brandon Ross, Masujaa, electric guitar; Marcus Rojas, Edwin Rodriguez, tuba; Gene Lake, drums.

★★★★★

What catapults Henry Threadgill into the highest ranks of living jazz composers is not so much the notes he commits to paper but the singular spin he gives those notes, the vital ideas about collective improvisation he imparts on his groups, and his deliciously warped sense of jazz historicism. In short, Threadgill is a supreme architect of attitude, and his brilliant new traveling circus conveys a fresh attitude, one almost of its own devising.

After his five-year Sextett project ended two years ago, Threadgill returned to his drawing board. The resulting *Very Very Circus*—two tubas, two guitars, sax, trombone (since this recording, he has replaced it with french horn), and drums—provides new evidence that Threadgill is in a sort of extended creative prime (apart from whatever absurd problems he has with snaring American record labels and stateside audiences).

Very Very Circus is a logical model of balance: tubas hold down the low end and act contrapuntally against variegated guitar riffs on top, with sax and bone fleshing out the mid-section. Guitarist Brandon Ross is a real comer, capably balancing the edgy and the ethereal. His muttering ostinato anchors the dark rum-

bling "Bee Dee Aff" and elsewhere he floats tones and chord fragments like disembodied pedal-steel guitar lines. As always, Threadgill threads his compositions with spare lines, evoking Kurt Weill, New Orleans musical practices, and, yes, circus-music elements. "First Church Of This" says a lot in the space of its hypnotically recurring six-measure 6/4 pattern. "Exacto" has a mock-march cadence that spills into a sideways samba. A melancholy air marks the material, but the vitality of both the concept and the ensemble mesh keeps it from sinking into self-pity.

This is a very very fine album, which better defines its latent logic with each new listen. (reviewed on CD)

—Josef Woodard



Kinsey Report

POWERHOUSE—Charisma/Pointblank 2-91421: *IMAGE MAKER; TEENAGE RAGE; I'LL BE SINGING THE BLUES; BAD TALKING; HIT THE SPOT; HEART'S ON FIRE; KEEP ON MOVING; WALK WITH BALANCE; JAMMIN' OUT TONIGHT; GOOD MORNIN' MISSISSIPPI.* (42:13)

Personnel: Donald Kinsey, guitar, vocals; Ralph Kinsey, drums, percussion; Kenneth Kinsey, bass; Ronald Prince, guitar; Steve Lange, Annabel Lamb, background vocals; Billy Branch, harmonica (cuts 9, 10); Big Daddy Kinsey, guitar, vocals (10).

★★★★★

Donald and Ralph Kinsey, sons of Indiana bluesman Lester "Big Daddy" Kinsey, tried to break the heavy-metal color barrier in the '70s, but their power trio, White Lightnin', succeeded only in inspiring Vernon Reid to form Living Colour a decade later. Donald went on to tour the world with Bob Marley, then rejoined Ralph, younger brother Kenneth, and family friend Ron Prince to back Big Daddy, playing high-energy blues with a subversive funk-rock twist. On *Powerhouse*, their debut release on Virgin's new Pointblank label, the Kinseys let it all hang out, with crunching riffs, potent vocals, pumped-up rhythms, and enough raw blues to show they haven't forgotten where they came from.

Donald's singing and lead guitar are searingly intense yet never strident. Even his most metallic solos, on "Image Maker" and "Teenage Rage," are whistle-clean and almost embarrassingly logical, with nods to Jimi Hendrix and his former employer Albert King. The remaining Kinsey-penned material has a suaver, more soulful feel, with foxy chord changes and just a pinch of reggae on "Jammin' Out Tonight." Rootsy and resourceful, the music lasers through pimply clichés to expose the

throbbing heart of the blues-rock connection. Whether it can crack the headbangers' market remains to be seen. (reviewed on CD)

—Larry Birnbaum



Johnny Griffin

THE CAT—Antilles 422-848 421: *THE CAT; WISTFUL; WHAT DO YOU DO?; CHICAGO'S CALLING; WOE IS ME; THE COUNT; 63RD ST. THEME; HOT SAKE; WALTZ FOR MA.*

Personnel: Griffin, tenor sax; Michael Weiss, piano; Dennis Irwin, bass; Kenny Washington, drums; Curtis Fuller, trombone (cuts 1, 3, 6); Steve Nelson, vibraphone (1, 3, 6).

★★★★½

Johnny Griffin's not exactly unknown, but doesn't always get his due as one of the scrappiest, most playful and resourceful tenorists in the postbop mainstream. He's known for playing fast, and can rip through changes at a rapid clip, with unflagging drive and a hard, almost pitiless sound—like on "Hot Sake." (Regarding his tone, remember he was Monk's tenorist between John Coltrane and Charlie Rouse.) But he also likes his slow tempos s-l-o-w. On the drowsy "Woe Is Me," he speaks low like a bedroom romantic, his tone soft and furry.

Johnny covers the middle ground, too: for "The Count," he honors Basie by setting a perfectly relaxed medium tempo, and by seamlessly blending on the head with guest Fuller, whom he first worked with in the '50s. Griffin's from Chicago, and his sound is saturated with urban blues. He'll season his lines with grotesque harsh notes for effect (his stomping "63rd St. Theme"), but they don't dominate his sound as they do, say, Chicagoan Von Freeman's. On the stealthy prowling "The Cat"—imagine "Pink Panther" not played for laughs—he builds from tender whispers to lashing rasps. Like Ben Webster, he values a wide variety of attacks.

Griffin's classic tenor is surrounded with a classic hard-bop rhythm team. Irwin's bass, not too loud in the mix, sounds like a real bass, not twanging rubber bands; on "Woe Is Me," he plays as little as possible while still marking the time and changes. Nelson's Bags-ish milk-bottle vibes sound is perfect, and drummer Washington comps better than most pianists—the crisp Weiss not included. Johnny's written himself some uncommonly strong tunes to show off his strengths—"What Do You Do?" is lodged halfway between a ballad and a blues, and he dances across two distinct waltzes. If the eternal verities of blues and swing are your pleasures—if they're not, get

help—you'll take to *The Cat* like tabby to a bowl of cream. (reviewed on cassette)

—Kevin Whitehead



Richard Thompson

RUMOR AND SIGH—Capitol CDP 7 95713 2: *READ ABOUT LOVE*; *I FEEL SO GOOD*; *I MISUNDERSTOOD*; *GREY WALLS*; *YOU DREAM TOO MUCH*; *WHY MUST I PLEAD*; *1952 VINCENT BLACK LIGHTNING*; *BACKLASH LOVE AFFAIR*; *MYSTERY WIND*; *DON'T SIT ON MY JIMMY SHANDS*; *KEEP YOUR DISTANCE*; *MOTHER KNOWS BEST*; *GOD LOVES A DRUNK*; *PSYCHO STREET*. (61:27)

Personnel: Thompson, guitars, mandolin, hurdy-gurdy; Mitchell Froom, piano, Hammond organ, Portative organ, chamberlin, celeste, clavichord, echo harp; Jim Keltner, Mickey Curry (cuts 1, 2, 5, 8, 9, 11), drums; Alex Acuna, percussion; Jerry Schell, bass; Simon Nicol, guitar; Phillip Pickett, shawm, curtal, crumhorn; John Kirkpatrick, accordion, concertina; Aly Bain, fiddle; Clive Gregson & Christine Collister, vocals.

★★★★

Richard Thompson could very well be the hardest-working folk-rockers in the music business these days. Last year the ex-Fairport Convention founder/leader was at the helm of the brilliant *Hard Cash* album, a compilation of songs on exploitation in the workplace. The French/Frith/Kaiser/Thompson supergroup released the wonderfully quirky, musically eclectic *Invisible Means* (see "Reviews" Jan. '91), and the extraordinary guitarist even managed to sit in for a couple of tunes on the latest albums by Bonnie Raitt, Henry Kaiser, and Beausoleil. As if that weren't enough, Thompson has put out a gem of a solo album, the follow-up to his 1988 release, the tragically unnoticed *Amnesia*.

Thompson expresses witty and bizarre Pythonesque humor and sensitively explores the romantic side of life with all its mysteries, pain, and wonder. He is the genius behind these 14 tunes that are scattered all over the place thematically. You get a rocker about a young kid learning about sex from porn magazines, followed by a pop piece about an ex-con bent on destruction, followed by a somber lament on lost love that leads into an unusual number about a person having to institutionalize his mentally ill lover. But that's nothing until you get to the black ode to the masochistic, tattooed, thrash-metal queen, the buoyant two-step/jig that tells the story of a polka-obsessed partygoer, the rocking slam at Thatcherism, and the surrealistic endsong that is a tempo-shifting parody of a horror sitcom.

If the hilarious tunes (and there are several,

as you might imagine) were the extent of Thompson's brilliance, he might get relegated to novelty-act status. But, like John Prine, Thompson is a quintessential songwriter who writes a classic with every outing. On this album, there are two: the gripping, startling "God Loves A Drunk" and "1952 Vincent Black Lightning," a narrative folk song complete with bright acoustic guitar fingerpicking. Big bonus to the whole package: Thompson's amazing guitar versatility throughout. (reviewed on CD)

—Dan Ouellette



Andrew Hill

BUT NOT FAREWELL—Blue Note CDP 94971 2: *WESTBURY*; *BUT NOT FAREWELL*; *NICODEMUS*; *GEORGIA HAM*; *FRIENDS*; *SUNNYSIDE*; *GONE*. (63:24)

Personnel: Hill, piano; Greg Osby, alto and soprano saxes (cuts 1-5); Robin Eubanks, trombone (1-4); Lonnie Plaxico, bass (1-4); Cecil Brooks III, drums (1-4).

★★★★½

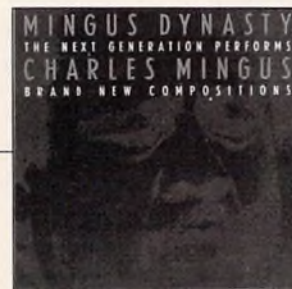
The only thing missing from Andrew Hill's *Eternal Spirit*, his much-heralded return to Blue Note in 1989, was the reflective solo piano that made 1988's *Verona Rag* (Soul Note) and 1979's *From California With Love* (Artists House) such great albums. He covers that territory in dramatic fashion on this fine follow-up, which also features a youthful crew of cutting-edge sidemen.

On *Eternal Spirit*, an album that was lush and lyrical alongside more turbulent, viscerally exciting mid-'60s Blue Note works like *Point Of Departure* and *Involution*, Hill showed signs of mellowing with age. He hints at that direction again on compositions like the graceful jazz waltz "Westbury" and the romantic title cut, a tango highlighting Eubank's warm tone and flowing lines. But even within those tamer confines, Hill's solos are still provocative, full of angular phrasing and unpredictable dynamics and possessing a certain *misterioso* rhythmic sense that recalls Monk, particularly on "Nicodemus." Plaxico and Brooks provide Hill with a looser rhythmic base than he got from Ben Riley and Rufus Reid on *Eternal Spirit*. And Eubank's warm, inviting tone is the perfect foil for Osby's severe, left-of-center alto lines, perhaps best exemplified on the 17-minute "Georgia Ham."

Osby, whose M-Base sensibilities brought a fresh edge to *Eternal Spirit*, remains a renegade presence on this session, though his playing is unusually lyrical and restrained on the empathetic duet, "Friends." The real treats here are the two solo piano pieces: "Sunny-

side" takes Andrew back to church and on the brooding "Gone" he turns out the lights in the studio and digs deep within. The results are glorious. (reviewed on CD)

—Bill Milkowski



Mingus Dynasty

THE NEXT GENERATION—Columbia 47405: *SKETCH FOUR*; *PORTRAIT*; *OPUS FOUR*; *HARLENE*; *OPUS THREE*; *FAREWELL FAREWELL*; *WHAM BAM*; *NOON NIGHT*; *BAD COPS*; *PILOBOLUS*. (61:50 minutes)

Personnel: Jack Walrath, trumpet; Craig Handy, flute, tenor sax; Alex Foster, piccolo, clarinet, soprano and tenor saxes; George Adams, tenor sax, narration (cut 9); John Hicks, Benny Green (9), piano; Ray Drummond, bass; Marvin "Smitty" Smith, Victor Lewis (10), drums; Charles Mingus (1), Eric Mingus (9), vocals.

★★★★

A frail, once leonine voice sings a melody of faded insouciance, which floats upon the clicking of a metronome. Drums pick up the beat, a muted trumpet, the melody; the kernel of "Sketch Four" becomes reality, handed from one generation to the next.

After the reconstructive feat that was *Epitaph* (see "Reviews" July '90), the transcription and arrangement of melodies Charles Mingus sang into a tape recorder during the last year of his life is a relatively small matter. Yet, the fact that "Sketch Four" and the sweet, yet wistful "Harlene" (both composed when Mingus' health had declined to the point where he couldn't even keep time on the arm of his wheelchair), as well as "Bad Cops"—a new, funk-drenched setting of an unpublished excerpt from his autobiography, *Beneath The Underdog*—could be brought to life, and stand shoulder-to-shoulder with pieces fully realized by Mingus, makes *The Next Generation* a vital measure of Mingus Dynasty's linkage to its namesake.

The Next Generation is a very apt title, as musical director Jack Walrath's well-drawn bead on the material and his fluent, forceful trumpet meld the hydra-like sax section of George Adams, Craig Handy, and Alex Foster with the precisely calibrated gears of John Hicks, Ray Drummond, and Smitty Smith. What results is a forward-looking statement about the music of Charles Mingus. Whether composed in the '50s, like the poignant "Portrait," or the '70s, like the soulful, scorching "Opus Three" and "Opus Four," Mingus' compositions are renewed. Were Mingus a 22-year-old, he'd be hailed as someone who'd carry jazz into the next century. (reviewed on cassette)

—Bill Shoemaker

hat

ZORN ON ZORN

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

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

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

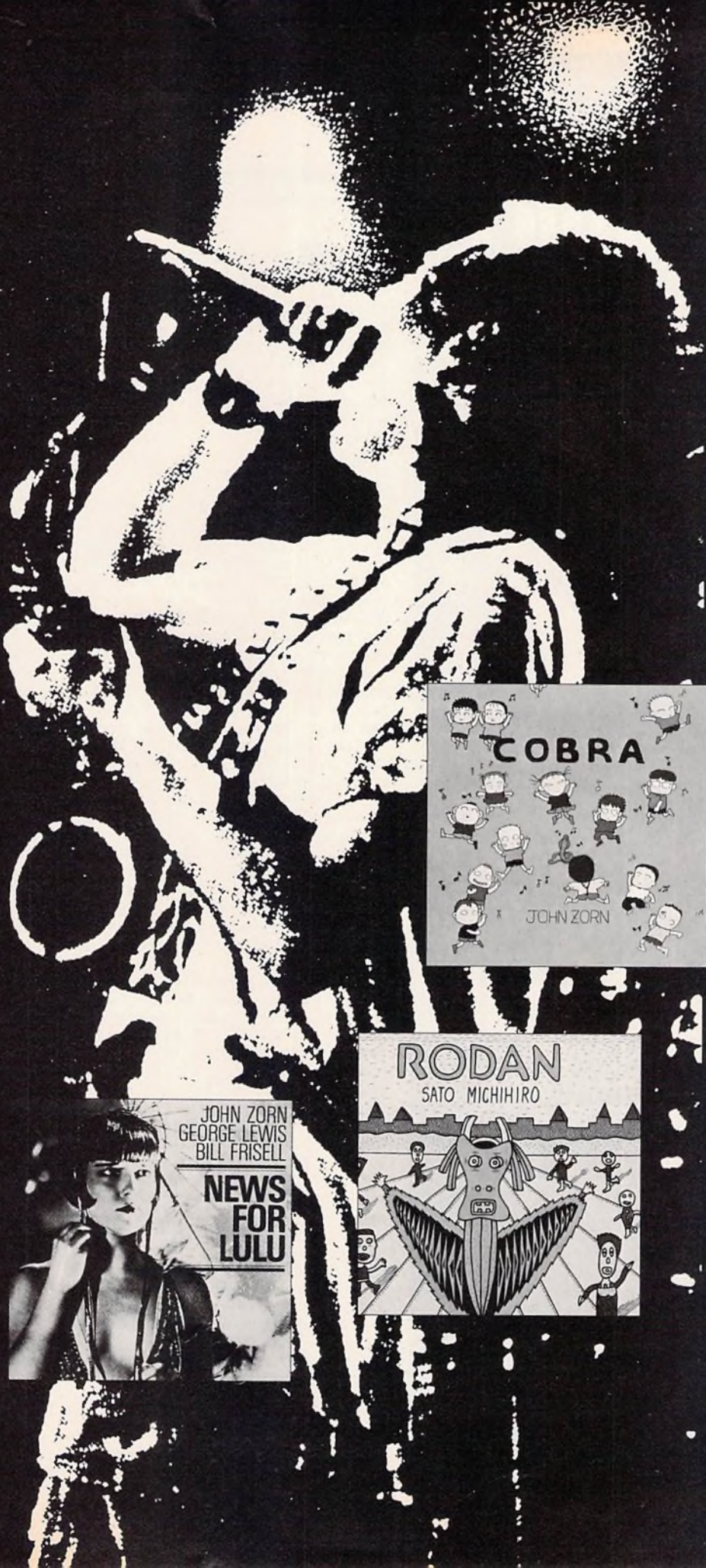
The same thing is true when I work in the studio, like the Sato Michihiro project (RODAN, hat Art CD 6015). Even when I'm working in a NEWS FOR LULU (hat Art CD 6005) and MORE NEWS FOR LULU (hat Art CD 6055) situation, where I think of myself more as a textural player – which say Dolphy was – someone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

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

(as told to Art Lange, August 1990)

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Roots Revisited

by Larry Birnbaum

Now that Robert Johnson has conquered the pop charts, Columbia/Legacy has issued the second batch of CDs in its Roots 'N' Blues series, this time with **Bessie Smith** as standard-bearer. Despite the label's huge back-catalog, it's a smaller package, with many artists on the compilation albums carried over from the first release, and two new single-artist single albums (Bessie's is a double) that are less essential than the previous three. The material ranges from the magnificent to the mundane, but there are more than enough magic moments to make every disc worth having.

Columbia put out all of Bessie's 160 known tracks on five double albums in 1970, so there's nothing new besides digital sound on *Bessie Smith/The Complete Recordings Vol. 1* (C2K 47091; 62:25/61:20: ★★★★★½), which comes with a 28-page booklet drawn from Chris Albertson's 1972 biography. Because her earliest period was generally her weakest, the vinyl series coupled her first and last sides and worked in toward the middle. The CDs, however, are strictly chronological, and Vol. 1, from 1923-24, consists entirely of acoustical recordings; Bessie's more lifelike electrical sessions, which permitted the use of larger back-up ensembles, began just afterward. But only analog fanatics could fail to appreciate the reduced noise and the cumulative impact of these hour-long discs. The accompaniments, mostly just piano, are pedestrian, but Bessie's voice, arguably the greatest of the century, overcomes and overwhelms. From the very first cut, her best-selling cover of Alberta Hunter's "Down Hearted Blues," her phrasing and timing are flawlessly natural, with an earthy lilt and guttural edge that still seem modern today.

While sexual innuendo has been a part of the blues from its inception, most of the double-entendres on *Raunchy Business: Hot Nuts & Lollypops* (CK 46783; 61:32: ★★★★★½) are fairly tame—plays on hot dogs, stoves, pencils, bananas, pussycats, etc. But one of the two versions of "Shave 'Em Dry" (both credited to Lucille Bogan, though they're obviously by two different singers) is raw enough to curl 2 Live Crew's ears. Other artists include Lonnie Johnson, Bo Carter, and Lil Johnson, whose "Get 'Em From The Peanut Man (Hot Nuts)" was revived in the '60s as a frat-party anthem. The music, from 1928-39, often copies the slicked-up neo-barrelhouse formula patented by the rival Bluebird label, but the Mississippi Sheiks' string-band antics hark back to an earlier era.

The city-born **Memphis Minnie** spent her formative years in rural Mississippi and was one of the few women to perform in a country blues style. Her early hits featured her husband, Kansas Joe McCoy, but they split up prior to the tracks on *Memphis Minnie—Hoodoo Lady* (1933-1937) (CK 46775; 59:21: ★★★★★½). Her clear, forceful singing is accompanied here by piano, bass, drums, clarinet, mandolin, or just her own ragtime-inflected guitar, but the songs themselves grow repetitious, with too many sexual-food metaphors.



Bessie Smith: the Empress strikes back

Despite stabs at the urbane Bluebird sound, Minnie's country roots always show—most effectively on "If You See My Rooster (Please Run Him Home)."

Though it's associated with the devil, the blues owes plenty to Afro-Christian music, and vice-versa. Blues fans have largely ignored the gospel and spiritual heritage, so praise Columbia for risking *Preachin' The Gospel: Holy Blues* (CK 46779; 60:25: ★★★★★). The blues connection is sometimes tenuous—Arizona Dranes, for example, shows stronger ties to white country music—but the material is lively and varied, with revelations and epiphanies galore. There's Washington Phillips' exquisite self-accompaniment on a keyboard dulcimer, the Rev. Johnny Blakey's frog-croaking sermons, Josh White's luminous, Bob Dylan-inspired "Jesus Gonna Make Up My Dying Bed," Blind Gary Davis' tear-jerking "Lord, I Wish I Could See," and Blind Willie Johnson's transcendent "Motherless Children Have A Hard Time."

Blind Boy Fuller's wide popularity in the '30s is attributable to both clean musicianship and dirty lyrics. *Blind Boy Fuller—East Coast Piedmont Style* (CK 46777; 61:55: ★★★★★) contains many of his earliest 1935 recordings but only a smattering of his later work, including just one track with his frequent partner Sonny Terry. Fuller borrows a variety of blues styles, personalizing them with crisp vocals and sprightly guitar picking in the flowing manner of his native North Carolina. Breezy and entertaining, he seldom reaches for emotional depth.

Great Blues Guitarists: String Dazzlers (CK 47060; 61:29: ★★★★★) uses mostly artists found elsewhere in the series: Lonnie Johnson, Sylvester Weaver, Big Bill Broonzy, Josh White, and the impassioned gospel groaner Blind Willie Johnson, who surely merits his own disc. Despite the album's title and the inclusion of several instrumentals, the vocals often outshine the guitar work, though Lonnie Johnson's jazzy, acrobatic duets with Eddie Lang are dazzling indeed. Blind Willie McTell, Casey Bill Weldon, and Tampa Red also flaunt formidable chops, and it's great to hear Blind Lemon Jefferson without background hiss—but the album as a whole feels like an afterthought. (all reviewed on CD)

DB



Charles Tolliver

GRAND MAX—Black Lion BLOC760145: *GRAND MAX; TRUTH; PRAYER FOR PEACE; OUR SECOND FATHER; REPETITION.* (64:24)

Personnel: Tolliver, trumpet, flugelhorn; John Hicks, piano; Reggie Workman, bass; Alvin Queen, drums.

★ ★ ★ ½

LIVE IN BERLIN, AT THE QUASIMODO/VOL. 1—Strata-East SECD 9003: *RUTHIE'S HEART; AH, I SEE; STRETCH; ON THE NILE.* (58:45)

Personnel: Tolliver, trumpet; Alain Jean-Marie, piano; Ugonna Okegwo, bass; Ralph Van Duncan, drums.

★ ★ ★ ½

Charles Tolliver plays with a blood-rushing urgency. A brazen trumpeter with just a bit of avant-garde carryover from the '60s, he sometimes suggests Clifford Brown or early Freddie Hubbard (that razor-ripping phraseology and flag-waving vibrato) and, to a lesser extent, Red Rodney (exuberance) and Don Cherry (congested lines). These live dates, recorded 16 years apart in Europe, show that he is yet another older talent deserving wider recognition.

On the Black Lion date, recorded in Holland in 1972, the heat begins immediately with the title track, a tribute to Max Roach. Tolliver's former employer. The trumpeter explodes all over the place—buzz-tones, raspy runs, high-note blasts, bright lines—expertly tracked by Queen's interactive battery. Hicks' edgy, percussive accompaniment and solo add to the rush. No matter what the tune, it all comes down to the same thing: This band will attack the music with high intensity, Tolliver pouring out the notes, Hicks driving relentlessly, Workman nailing down the rhythmic center, and Queen kicking everyone and everything up a notch.

Tolliver recorded *Live In Berlin* in 1988, and the rhythm section, an ad-hoc unit, feels looser. The trumpeter is just as excitable and exciting as on the earlier album, but Jean-Marie, et al., are cooler. Not cool, just cooler. "Stretch," which suggests Stanley Turrentine's "Sugar," is the best performance, with Okegwo in a Paul Chambers-like walking groove behind Jean-Marie, who swings like the late Wynton Kelly. Tolliver's grand entrance after the piano solo reiterates that this trumpeter is always charged-up, always emotional. He also manages to balance short bursts and lyrical phrases throughout the album. (Strata-East, a label founded by Tolliver and pianist Stanley Cowell in 1970, is available from Condominium Recs, Box 36, GCS, New York, NY 10136.) (reviewed on CD)

—Owen Cordle

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You Call That Music?

by John Ephland

Later-day **John Coltrane** is a marvel, a fulfillment to some; others see this period in his career as a mess, a logical conclusion to pointless experimentation, rife with free-jazz absurdities. This magazine, in fact, joined the latter group with comments on his 1961 *Live At The Village Vanguard*. According to John Tynan, Coltrane's playing was nothing more than "musical nonsense," "gobbledegook," and "anti-jazz." In another review, critic Ira Gitler considered Coltrane's solo on "Chasin' The Trane" "monotonous, a treadmill to the Kingdom of Boredom." Exuding wondrous pith, Gitler reduced Trane's blowing to "one big air-leak."

Thirty years later, the Vanguard sessions sound pretty tame, even conventional, next to recordings Coltrane made the last three years of his life. If you were on the fence with "Chasin' The Trane," later titles such as *Sun Ship*, *Meditations*, *Ascension*, *New Thing At Newport*, and the '73 U.S. release of some of *Live In Japan* ended you on your ass. The music took many forms, going in all directions (except reverse); as a result, Coltrane lost scores of faithful followers he'd captivated during his hard-bop and ballad days. Another, more cur-



John Coltrane: driving toward transcendence

rent, side effect: his widespread influence as a player can be seen in the abundance of Coltrane clones, playing in styles that reflect little, if any, of his work past the early '60s (granted, not the easiest music to pursue).

No Wonder. *New Thing At Newport* (Impulse! GRD-105; 61:57: ★★★★★), from 1965, and

Live In Japan (Impulse! GRD-4-102; 65:15/54:34/69:58/57:19: ★★★★★), a year later, have, in a sense, become anthems to many who found in Coltrane's explorations invigorating—and often impossible—challenges to jazz' harmonic, melodic, and rhythmic structures. *Newport* provides an interesting case

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study of two tenors—**Archie Shepp** and Coltrane—with sympathetic free-jazz leanings offering fundamentally different results. Shepp found in Coltrane a mentor of the first class. His choice of materials suggested the spirit of Trane's adventures but nothing of his modal, eastern-influenced, or virtuosic blowing and abandon. Here, Shepp's band—with drummer Joe Chambers, bassist Barre Phillips, and vibist Bobby Hutcherson—plays the all-Shepp program with a quasi-classical, gutbucket blues feel, Hutcherson's vibes cutting like ice chips through Shepp's staccato shards, as on "Le Matin Des Noirs." "Skag" features Shepp the poet, reciting race-oriented lines to the musings of his mates—his evocations are the vocal equivalent of his tenor: slightly muted, tempered yet aching. The pain of "Call Me By My Rightful Name," a waltz laden with broken-glass sonics, is the one tune with any sustained swing to it. This is Archie Shepp out-front, unpretentious, playing the times through his horn. (The CD bonus, 10-minute-plus "Gingerbread, Gingerbread Boy," the only real blowing vehicle for Shepp, originally appeared on his *On This Night*.)

Coltrane, on the other hand, is still "swinging." On his "One Down, One Up" and the bonus track "My Favorite Things" (originally released on *The Mastery Of John Coltrane*, Vol. 1), Trane takes bassist Jimmy Garrison, McCoy Tyner, and Elvin Jones on one of their

last relatively "straight" excursions. Tyner's solo on "One Down" (reminiscent of his '63 solo on "Afro Blue" from *Live At Birdland*) is a stunning example of his ability to incorporate Trane's intensity and outward-bound designs, all the while swinging hard. This was a "new thing" for Newport, having Shepp and Coltrane rip it up, and for different reasons. Shepp's political edge is complemented by the Coltrane drive towards transcendence. Jones' crashing, thrashing cymbals and emphatic snare and bass drum attacks egg Trane on as he fractures the spare melody of "One Down" into oblivion. The band's inspired yet sluggish take on "Things" (with Trane on soprano, of course) is interesting from an historical standpoint: it appears to be the classic quartet's last recorded "song"; apart from brief stretches on more outside fare later that year, the conventions of bebop find their last gasp here.

The four-CD *Live In Japan*, apart from Garrison's solos, is front-loaded to the max, with rhythmic as well as harmonic fluctuations galore. Despite the extended, herculean blowing (none of the tracks are less than 25 minutes), Coltrane was reportedly in great physical pain for most of these concerts recorded on two separate days in July of '66, just one year before his death at age 40 of a liver ailment. Recorded in Tokyo for radio broadcast, three of the four discs—all in mono—have never been available in the States before. The liner

notes include a Tokyo interview with Trane.

Garrison was the only link between old and new, with Elvin and McCoy being permanently replaced in early '66 by the fiery Rashied Ali and wife Alice, respectively. While all provide extended solos (Alice's playing is a revelation), it's fellow reedsman/traveler Pharoah Sanders who takes a good deal of the solo space throughout, relieving and countering Coltrane's insistent splintering of notes with his own crazed overtones and multiphonics—imagine Archie Shepp on acid. Apart from an obliterated waltz ("Afro Blue"), and a 57-minute version of "Things," with Trane playing alto as well as soprano, it's an all-Coltrane program of "tunes": "Leo," two versions of "Peace On Earth" (suggestive of his "After The Rain" and "Dear Lord"), and 54 minutes of "Crescent." Paradoxically, the volcanoes of sound exude peace.

Definitely an acquired taste, *Live In Japan* and *New Thing At Newport* can't help but sound fresh, revolutionary next to today's mainstream fare. A tough act to follow (where would Trane's, like Bird's, music have gone?), the pioneers and descendents of these sounds are around—Shepp can be heard on Frank Zappa's current *You Can't Do That On Stage Anymore*, Vol. 4—but the times and faces have changed. In this increasingly plastic, constipated age, it's music with a so-called groove—and not necessarily a message—that really counts. (reviewed on CD) **DB**

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MARLON JORDAN

QUINTET

"LEARSON'S

RETURN."

**BACK WITH A
VENGEANCE.**

ON COLUMBIA.

Produced by Delfeayo Marsalis.

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Dorothy Donegan

DOROTHY ROMPS—A PIANO RETROSPECTIVE 1953-79—Rosetta RRCD 1318: *DONEGAN WALK; JUST IN TIME; DOROTHY ROCKS; PUT YOUR ARMS AROUND ME; GRIEG'S BOOGIE; LOUISE; TONKY HONK; THAT OLD BLACK MAGIC; BOOGIE IN THE NURSERY; LIMEHOUSE BLUES; MINUET IN G (VARIATIONS); I WANT A LITTLE GIRL; KILROY WAS HERE; LULLABY OF BIRDLAND; DDT.* (48:30)
Personnel: Donegan, piano; (bass, drums, unlisted).

★★★★★

Meade Lux Lewis

THE BLUES PIANO ARTISTRY—Riverside OJCCD-1759-2: *HAMMER CHATTER; YOU WERE MEANT FOR ME; CELESTE BOUNCE; BEAR TRAP STOMP; FROMPY STOMP; ROUGH SEAS; MADAME VOD'S CELESTE BLUES; C-JAM BLUES; FATE; BREEZING AT THE CELESTE.* (45:00)
Personnel: Lewis, piano, celeste.

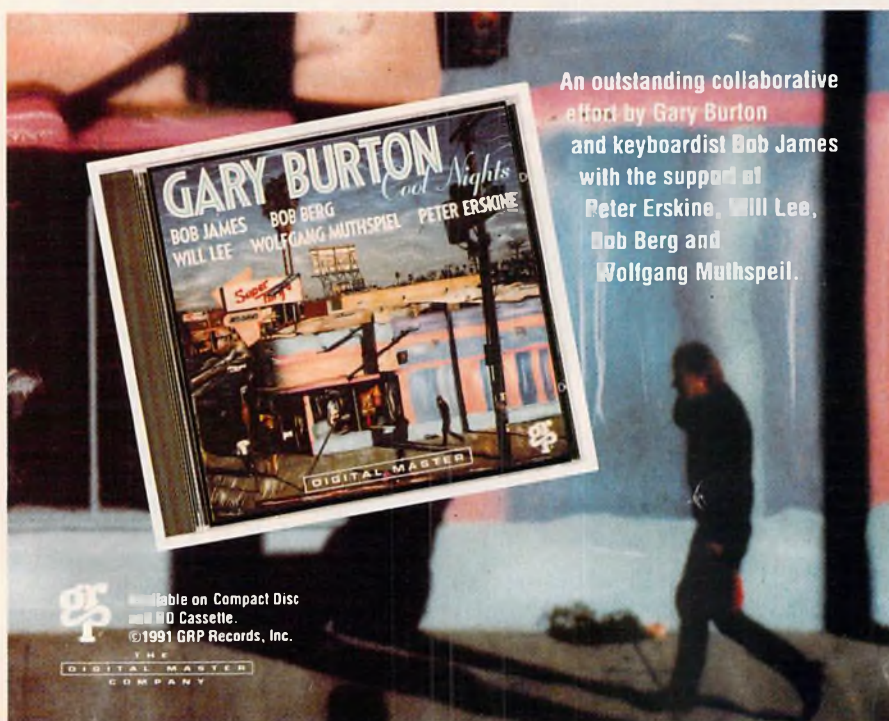
★★★★½

Here's a pair of sure-fire mood elevators. Both discs are by masterful pianists whose careers careened as precipitously as a roller coaster

at times and whose names may not be all that familiar. Lewis, considered one of the most famous of the "boogie woogie" pianists, was rediscovered by John Hammond in the mid-'30s, washing cars and driving a cab in Chicago. Donegan, now thriving at 68, has a pitifully small recorded output for a pianist whose virtuosic talent hovers close to that of Art Tatum, who was her mentor.

Lewis' Riverside album was originally recorded in 1961, and shows him still in peak form and worthy of his reputation as a grand master of the piano. His deep blues roots resonate throughout the album's 10 tracks, most of which are original tunes. And though each tune is propelled by Lewis' authoritative walking bass lines, each also tells its own story—rhythms heat up or simmer down, melodies rip right along or warble, as Lewis thoroughly shapes the flavor of each piece. The three tunes played on celeste, a delicate keyboard instrument, broaden the album's dimensions even further with the celeste's inherently playful sound.

Donegan can boogie with the best, but as this disc shows, she can do almost anything else as well. Donegan's playing—rooted in classical repertoire, jazz, the blues, and popular music of several decades—is virtually boundless. This disc, culled from studio and club date recordings, represents a concise history of jazz piano styles. Paderewski's simple "Minuet In G" is transformed into a fever-pitched stride piece; "Lullaby Of Birdland" opens with a fugue-like passage that develops into a rich, block-chord treatment of the song with Garner-esque flair. Though these tracks show Donegan both in trio and solo settings, she is always at the helm in terms of spirit and direction. *Dorothy Romps* is aptly named. (Rosetta Records, 115 West 16th St., NYC, NY 10011) (reviewed on CD) —Stephanie Stein



An outstanding collaborative effort by Gary Burton and keyboardist Bob James with the support of Peter Erskine, Will Lee, Bob Berg and Wolfgang Muthspiel.

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- 7 Only one selection counted in each category.

Circle Closed

by Jack Sohmer

With the release of *The Complete Commodore Jazz Recordings, Volume III* (Mosaic MR20-134: ★★★★★), producers Michael Cuscuna and Charles Lourie bring to a close the most comprehensive reissue program ever undertaken by a single label, independent or major. The story of Milt Gabler's pioneering New York record shop and the many top-ranking jazzmen recorded on the store's equally famous label is now a part of jazz history, and is nowhere better recounted than in the copious booklets accompanying the three Mosaic multi-LP boxed sets. Though the present set contains a "mere" 20 LPs, as compared with the 23 in each of the first two volumes, the time range of the sessions encompassed here is by far the widest of the three. And this is not inclusive of the first album in the box, which consists entirely of recently unearthed material by Bud Freeman (1938), Chu Berry (1941), Bunk Johnson (1942), and Billie Holiday (1944)

119" to the next selection, "Willie The Weeper," an old New Orleans stomp by Bob Wilber's Wild Cats. The Armstrong/Bechet-influenced 1947 Wilber session was not only the debut performance for the 19-year-old clarinetist and his equally young pianist, Dick Wellstood, but it also marked the official beginning of the East Coast traditional jazz revival, a movement that, happily, is still flourishing today. Quite appropriately, Wilber is followed by Ralph Sutton, whose definitive solo interpretations of Bix Beiderbecke's piano pieces and some better-known jazz standards then set the stage for an exciting set by the illustrious Sidney Bechet in his only appearance on this label.

Of lesser importance, but interesting nevertheless, are the two 1950 sessions of New Orleans trumpeter Johnny Wiggs, whose home-boy group included clarinetist Harry Shields (younger brother of the ODJB's Larry) and trombonist Tom Brown, who, in 1915, led the first band to have had the nasty word "jass" applied to its music. More generally accessible, however, is the next session, which features the seminal stride pianist, Willie "The Lion" Smith, in 20 single-take performances of both



Red Norvo: well, just don't stand there . . .

that had eluded Mosaic's research during the production of volumes I and II. Overall, in the 246 tracks contained here, there are 83 previously unissued alternate takes and new titles recorded between July 1945 and July 1957. Also included is a detailed 68-page discography of the entire Commodore catalog.

Record Two begins, then, where *Volume II* left off, with the complete Town Hall Jazz Concert, highlighted by Red Norvo's nonet, the Stuff Smith Trio, and the Don Byas/Slam Stewart duo. Other outstanding sessions early in the set are those by Jonah Jones, Wild Bill Davison (two classic dates with Joe Marsala and George Wettling and then Albert Nicholas and Dave Tough), a recreated Original Dixieland Jazz Band led by trombonist Eddie Edwards, and two Condon-styled groups fronted by George Brunis, the first with Wild Bill and Tony Parenti and the second with Max Kaminsky and Johnny Mince. Record 10 opens with the most uncharacteristic music ever recorded for Commodore: Mel Powell's modern big band date and, even further afield, a classical outing for viola, cello, and Powell's piano. Then there's the almost-shocking aural leap from "Brahms' Rhapsody No. 3, Opus

originals and standards. Gabler must have anticipated this boxed set 40 years before the fact, because his next few sessions showcase one of the Lion's best disciples, Ralph Sutton, in both solo and quartet settings, first with Edmond Hall and then with Vic Dickenson.

Interspersed between these are dates by Frank Wess, whose 1954 swing-styled combos included Joe Wilder and, alternately, Henry Coker, Bennie Powell, and Urbie Green. Wess' unadorned, richly sonorous tenor sound is a joy to behold in these days of affectation and stylistic overkill. Closing the album is the entire lifetime output of one of jazz' most legendary musicians, Texas pianist Peck Kelley. Recorded in 1957 in his native Houston with a local quintet, Kelley emerges, after all these decades of speculation, as a pianist of considerable talent and fluency. However, what he might have sounded like in the '20s, when reports of his genius were spread northward by Jack Teagarden and Pee Wee Russell, is something we will never know. What we do hear is a skillfully played amalgam of Tatum, Wilson, Tristano, and Shearing, but scarcely a hint of the more reasonably anticipated Hines, Waller, Sullivan, or Stacy. (reviewed on LP) DB

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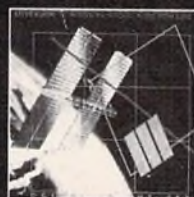
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Strange Bedfellows

by Bill Milkowski

Irony, isn't it? Suddenly GRP, the label that jazz critics love to hate, has become the custodian for archival material on Impulse! Yes, the label that brought you the Rippingtons, George Howard, and David Benoit, not to mention tributes to cartoon characters Charlie Brown and Garfield the Cat, has taken on the sacred duty of dispensing the great works of John Coltrane, Oliver Nelson, McCoy Tyner, Archie Shepp, and Albert Ayler, among other significant Impulse! artists that helped define "The New Wave In Jazz."

And so, ironically, the purveyors of happy jazz in the '80s have become the keepers of the '60s flame. The deal went down in February of 1990 when MCA acquired GRP. At that point, GRP assumed control over the jazz department of MCA, whose holdings include the Impulse!, Decca, Blue Thumb, Dot, ABC-Paramount, and Peacock labels. Under the title "GRP Presents the Legendary Masters of Jazz," the specialty label started up by Dave Grusin and Larry Rosen is now dedicated to preserving the rich, and largely botched, Impulse! legacy.

As Bud Katznel, GRP's senior VP of sales and distribution, told *Billboard's* Jeff Levenson, "Here we have a chance, in fact a responsibility, to give back to the consumer the heritage of jazz. We take very seriously the task of mining these treasures."

That sentiment comes across loud and clear in GRP's first batch of Impulse! reissues. The label seems to have approached this new task/responsibility with a sense of reverence. The packaging is superb, including rare photos of the artists and updates to the original liner notes written by series producer Michael Cuscuna. And the sound quality of the remastering, a big concern among jazz purists, is impeccable. In addition, the titles include bonus tracks that bring the CDs up to an hour in length.

Let It Go (Impulse! GRD-104; 66:24; ★★★★★) is a soulful collaboration between tenor saxophonist **Stanley Turrentine** and his then-wife **Shirley Scott**. Recorded in 1964, it is a quintessential example of relaxed swing. With only a couple of nods to commercialism ("On A Clear Day You Can See Forever" and the bossa "Ciao, Ciao"), this project highlights the special chemistry that Shirley and Stanley had together in the studio. Turrentine's tenor digs deep on the bluesy original "Good Lookin' Out" and he phrases with soulful ease on "Sure As You're Born," while Shirley's sanctified, roller-rink organ rings out on the jump number "T'ain't What You Do (It's The Way That Cha Do It)." Three extra tracks, including a magnificent reading of "The Feeling Of Jazz" with a relaxed groove laid down by bassist Bob Cranshaw and drummer Otis Candy Finch, are from Shirley's album *Everybody Loves A Lover* and feature more rootsy blowing from Stanley.

Oliver Nelson's *Sound Pieces* (Impulse! GRD-103; 55:04; ★★★★★), originally released in 1966, showcases the composer's orchestral

writing and his soprano sax work. Most ambitious work in this collection is "Sound Pieces For Jazz Orchestra," a grandiose, soundtracky suite for 22-piece orchestra. Biggest surprise is Nelson's ferocious soprano work on Monk's "Straight No Chaser," one of two quartet bonus tracks featuring Ron Carter, Grady Tate, and Steve Kuhn.

McCoy Tyner recorded *Today And Tomorrow* (Impulse! GRD-106; 51:15; ★★★★★) in '63 and '64, just passed the middle of his tenure with John Coltrane. That vibe is very much



McCoy Tyner: at 25, showing profound depth

present on the rhythmically-charged opening track, "Contemporary Focus," powered by Elvin Jones and featuring the soaring tenor sax work of John Gilmore, a player who deeply inspired Coltrane. Elvin swings lightly on the lyrical waltz "Three Flowers," which highlights some fluid trumpet playing by Thad Jones alongside impressive solos by Gilmore and alto player Frank Strozier. The remainder of the album is a relaxed trio setting with drummer Albert "Tootie" Heath and Coltrane's bassist Jimmy Garrison on standards like "Autumn Leaves," "You'd Be So Nice To Come Home To," and "When Sunny Gets Blue." Tyner shows profound depth on this session, taking a fresh approach to the lessons he learned from Bud Powell, Red Garland, Erroll Garner, and Horace Silver.

Also included in GRP's first batch of Impulse! reissues are two John Coltrane sessions (see separate review, p. 38) and a greatest hits package including such gems as Oliver Nelson's "Stolen Moments," Coltrane's recording of "Afro Blue," Archie Shepp's take of Trane's "Naima," the Ellington-Coltrane collaboration on "In A Sentimental Mood," the Ellington-Coleman Hawkins summit meeting on "In My Solitude," Sonny Rollins' "Alfie," and Ben Webster's recording of "Someone To Watch Over Me." A perfect primer for those just beginning to build their jazz CD collection. (all reviewed on CD)

DB

Dex Lives!

by Art Lange

Legend has it that hours after Charlie Parker's death, "Bird Lives!" was found scrawled all over 52nd St. The discs reviewed below—each from live concerts—are an aural reminder of the late **Dexter Gordon's** powers of musical persuasion and invention, and suggest that, like Bird, his reputation should continue to soar after death.

Though they range over a 12-year period, Gordon's playing is remarkably consistent. After all, there was a level that Dexter seldom fell below (and which so many tenors today seldom reach), and the live setting urged him into lengthy, inspired blowing. I'm giving each disc the same number of stars. So if you need to choose between them you're likely going to have to do it based on sidemen or favorite songs.



Long Tall Dex: an orchestra unto himself

The oldest is also the hottest. *Take The 'A' Train* (Black Lion BLCD 760133; 67:39: ★★★★★) was caught in 1967 at Copenhagen's Montmartre Jazzhaus, home turf for Dex during his long European residency. Gordon's gruff tenor tone is captured up close, and he's on—even the "ballads" like "But Not For Me" are bumped to up-tempos, while burners like the title tune and "Love For Sale" are all sinew and muscle, and a medium-tempo stroll like Lou Donaldson's "Blues Walk" becomes a riff-and-quote fest. Longtime keyboard compatriot Kenny Drew trips easily but not insignificantly across the keys—at these tempos no mean feat. Bassist N-HØPedersen is fluid and ferocious in his solos, and Tootie Heath's drums are a tad high in the mix.

It's arguable that the current neo-bop revival didn't spring fully-grown from the forehead of Wynton Marsalis, but commenced with the surprising surge in popularity upon Dexter's dramatic return to the U.S. in 1976. *Homecoming* (Columbia C2K 46824; 64:49/66:52: ★★★★★) documents that first week's Village Vanguard gig (two additional tunes, "Fried Bananas" and "Body And Soul," have been

tacked onto the CD reissue). Six of the 10 tunes (all over 11 minutes long) are by bandmembers, and the music feels more casual, less aggressive—though "Gingerbread Boy" and "It's You Or No One" are so energetic they're exhausting; so sue me, but I prefer Dexter's often perverse take on standards. Biggest difference is in personnel, with Woody Shaw sharing the front line. Dexter was in many ways an orchestra unto himself, larger than life, and not the kind who needed another horn to add color, contrast, or ballast. That said, Shaw's playing is typically daring and darting. Pianist Ronnie Mathews, bassist Stafford James, and drummer Louis Hayes are all journeymen, but there are moments when Gordon and the rhythm section suddenly click and you know you're in the presence of pure, undiluted jazz.

Various dates during 1978 and '79 at San Francisco's Keystone Korner with his

working band of the period (George Cables on piano, Rufus Reid's bass, drummer Eddie Gladden) resulted in *Nights At The Keystone* (three individual CDs—Blue Note CDP 7 94848 2; 67:25: ★★★★★/CDP 7 94849 2; 73:41: ★★★★★/CDP 7 94850 2; 67:35: ★★★★★—replacing the two LPs, with seven new tracks). Cables commands much of the solo spotlight; his capella outings alter the texture, his uptempo phrasing fairly crackles (in *Volume 1's* "Backstairs" he thunders like the real McCoy), and his frequent rubato lends welcome variety (turning "As Time Goes By" on *Volume 3* into a fantasia). "Come Rain Or Come Shine" (*Volume 2*) is given a lengthy ramble through several tempos which shows the advantages of a working group. As for Dexter, the big news here is his ballads; "Sophisticated Lady" and "Easy Living" (*Volume 1*), and especially "More Than You Know" (*Volume 2*) and "You've Changed" (*Volume 3*) reveal the persona behind the music, with character, heart, blood, guts, and nerve. You can feel the exertion, hear the ideas, sense the emotion and intensity. People just don't play the saxophone like this anymore, alas. (all reviewed on CD) **DB**



Charlie Parker

THE COMPLETE "BIRTH OF THE BOP"—Slash ST-CD-535: *VARIATIONS ON HONEYSUCKLE ROSE & BODY AND SOUL* (No. 1); *CHEROKEE*; *MY HEART TELLS ME*; *I FOUND A NEW BABY*; *BODY AND SOUL* (No. 2); *SWEET GEORGIA BROWN* (No. 1); *THREE GUESSES (VARIATIONS ON 'I GOT RHYTHM,' No. 1)*; *BOOGIE WOOGIE*; *YARDIN' WITH YARD (VARIATIONS ON 'I GOT RHYTHM,' No. 2)*; *BODY AND SOUL* (No. 3); *EMBRACEABLE YOU*; *CHINA BOY*; *AVALLON*; *INDIANA*; *UNIDENTIFIED FRAGMENT*; *SWEET GEORGIA BROWN* (No. 2); *LOVER, COME BACK TO ME*; *SHAW NUFF*; *GROOVIN' HIGH*; *DIZZY ATMOSPHERE*. (72:46)

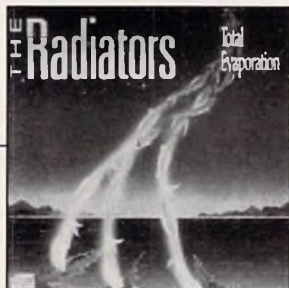
Personnel: Parker, alto, tenor sax (all selections), with Dizzy Gillespie, Billy Eckstine, trumpet; Don Byas, tenor sax; Effergie Ware, Hurley Ramey, guitar; Oscar Pettiford, Ray Brown, bass; Milt Jackson, vibes; Al Haig, piano; Stan Levey, drums; and others. (Note: "Embraceable You," "China Boy," and "Avalon" are overdubbing of Parker playing along with records—the first, a piano solo by Hazel Scott, and the others, the famous 78s by the Benny Goodman Trio and Quartet, respectively.)

★★★★★

With this release the jazz world will finally have its long-awaited chance to hear the earliest and rarest Charlie Parker material ever recorded. The album opens with a Kansas City home recording of Bird playing unaccompanied solos on two favorite standards, practice improvisations which probably date from the spring of 1940; at any rate, some months before his conventionally acknowledged "first" recorded documentation, the November 1940 Jay McShann Wichita recordings (see **DB** Dec. '90). Next we hear four more Kansas City cuts from September 1942, with Bird playing in his fully matured early bop style over straight rhythm guitar and drums. These sides are truly a revelation, for they reveal a young man in virtually complete control over a new style of jazz only hinted at by his predecessors.

The bulk of the remaining privately recorded material, from Chicago in 1943, finds Bird on tenor, an instrument which exposes clearly his debts to not only Lester Young but to Coleman Hawkins and Chu Berry as well. On the best of these, "Sweet Georgia Brown (No. 1)," he is heard jamming informally with Gillespie and Pettiford, while on the others, his hotel room buddies include Eckstine, Ramey, and Pettiford. Even better, though, are "Sweet Georgia Brown (No. 2)," a 1945 aircheck with Gillespie and Byas ("Lover, Come Back To Me"), and the three final tracks—with Gillespie, Jackson, Haig, Brown, and Levey—which originated in the AFRS "Jubilee" date of December 29, 1945, an infrequently reissued non-commercial studio recording verbally alluded to by Diz

on "Slim's Jam," which he and Bird cut with Slim Gaillard earlier that same day. (reviewed on CD)
—Jack Sohmer



Radiators

TOTAL EVAPORATION—Epic EK 46832: *Soul Deep; Let The Red Wine Flow; Total Evaporation; A Grain Of Salt; Molasses; Solid Ground; Never Let Your Fire Go Out; Everything Gets In The Way; You Can't Take It With You; Good As Gone; Party 'Till The Money Runs Out; Honey From The Bee; I Want To Go Where The Green Arrow Goes.* (57:31)

Personnel: Ed Volker, keyboards, vocals; Dave Malone, Camile Baudoin, guitars, vocals; Reggie Scanlan, bass; Frank Bua, drums; Glenn Sears, percussion; East Memphis Slim, Hammond B-3 organ (cut 9); the Memphis Horns: Andrew Love, tenor sax (1, 9, 11); Wayne Jackson, trumpet, trombone (1, 9, 11); Jim "Low Man" Spake, baritone sax (1, 9).

★ ★ ★

New Orleans bar bands are finally getting the recognition they deserve, taking breaks from their steaming club sets long enough to record r&b cookers for those of us who only pass through the Mardi Gras capital. Judging from the hot tunes the Radiators unleash on its third Epic album, the band no doubt packs folks into its live shows and gets the dance floor clogged pronto.

For the most part, *Total Evaporation* is robust blue-collar music: gritty vocals, rousing rhythms, spicy guitar riffs, and, on three numbers, killer brass supplied by the Memphis Horns. One of the best tunes on the album is the wonderfully reckless "Party 'Till The Money Runs Out," which, as the title suggests, is a dance-till-you-drop celebration that successfully evokes the spirit of a fun night out. I'll bet this song is a crowd favorite at Radiator gigs, along with the blues shuffle, "You Can't Take It With You," and the zesty "A Grain Of Salt" with its bracing Southern rock slide-guitar riffs and skin-thumping drumming. The beauty of the bunch is the tune that deviates the farthest from the album's r&b foundation: "Molasses" is a catchy, country-tinged number brightened by fine acoustic guitar playing and flavored with Caribbean percussion.

Unfortunately, on four other songs, the Radiators stray too far from the romping style they excel in. Such nondescript numbers as "Solid Ground" and "Let The Red Wine Flow" are indistinguishable from hundreds of other bland and predictable pop songs that lack the energy and passion of hard-driving roots music.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 47

BENNY GREEN

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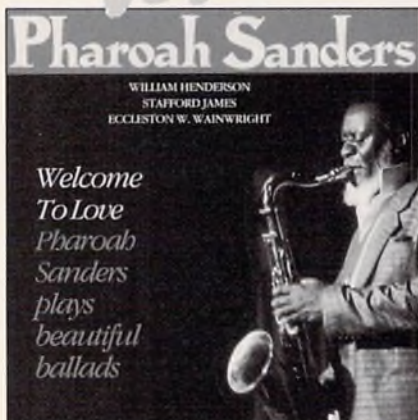
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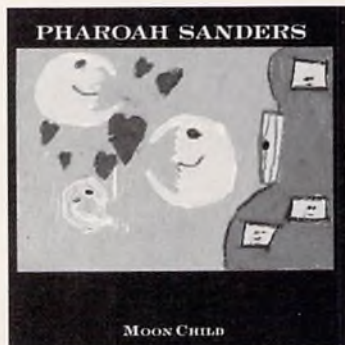
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MC'S 88 Hammers

by Kevin Whitehead

Marilyn Crispell knew what she wanted her piano to do before she ever heard Cecil Taylor, but there is a stylistic resemblance. She's one of the rare pianists with the chops to pull it off (unlike elbow-banging wannabees). Taylor's cluster bombs and thick, slabby harmonies resound through her playing; like John Henry, she loves to hear the hammers ring. But Crispell's working on her own variations.



Solo on *Live In San Francisco* (Music & Arts 633: ★★), from October '89, she alternately applies familiar CT devices— heavy but precise touch, insistent repetitions, use of space for dramatic contrast, call and response between hands—and harps rubato ballads like Trane's "Dear Lord." She's best where she unites them, using drummy technique on tonal material ("Tromos"), and covering "Ruby, My Dear," a bow to Monk's mastery of the lyrical and the percussive. Note the 70:05 program includes 16:30 of music from other M&A CDs by the Braxton/Crispell duo (see "Reviews" Nov. '90) and Reggie Workman (see below).

Live In Zurich (Leo 122; 52:08: ★★★½), from April '89 finds Crispell in trio with sympatico bassist Workman and drum poet Paul Motian, whose very loose pulsation doesn't always mesh with her headlong hurdle. But Workman inspires a harmonically richer "Dear Lord" and sometimes Paul's hide-the-beat phrasing's just right. The trio work effective change-ups. Crispell might jump from squared-off dissonant thunder to riffs arpeggios over walking bass. *Zurich's* uneven, but has triumphant moments.

The Victoriaville '90 quintet date *Circles* (Victo 12; 55:32: ★★★½) is arguably her best yet. The churning dynamic owes much to Cecil, but her snaky, savory themes don't. Her pieces could find a lot of variety in texture and tempo into this brainy, burning set in

the classic tradition—the free tradition fools scoff at. Altoist Oliver Lake and tenorist Peter Buettner match gutsy sounds and Workman and drummer Gerry Hemingway are the push-pull/throb carpet. Best of all, Crispell's writing helps bring out her piano voice—the suite-like motion lets her get to all her stuff.

But then she's apprenticed with structuralist/multi-reedist Anthony Braxton, a master at constructing rat's-maze live sets with their own parasystolic pulse, its own way of inhaling and exhaling. As Braxton says, all music swings somehow; one way to hear how his does is to focus on the overall shape of a set, with its supple variations in phrasing. On his *Live In Prag*

(Sound Aspects 038; 59:58: ★★★★★) from fall '84, with Crispell, Hemingway, and bassist John Lindberg, his themes flow in a manner that looks forward to *Circles*, despite a very different sound. Crispell's piano is usually *misterioso* spare and clear. Her sensitivity to silence and ensemble gravity show why she's the only pianist truly at home in his chordless music. By the time of *Quartet (London)* 1985 (Leo 200/201; 2 hours 1:40: ★★★★★), Braxton was splicing and overlapping scored lines in ever more complex ways to make musicians weep. The band strikes back. (Mark Dresser's now on bass.) The first set's darker, harsher, more conventionally powerful, with Crispell more expansive. The second set's closer to *Prag's* finely crafted elegance.

Crispell and Hemingway are also in Reggie Workman's Ensemble on *Images* (Music & Arts 634; 71:47: ★★★★★). The sextet was the subject of a tiny is-this-jazz? debate in New York lately, and the answer is: you have to ask? There are some long out-of-tempo passages, but the band can hit a backbeat groove ("Medea"), the laughing-horn bit on "Jus' Ole Mae" evokes the earliest jazz 78s, and the ever-underrated singer Jeanne Lee conjures both Abbey Lincoln and black poets' declamatory readings. Crispell lays down playful riffs or dense/tonal chords behind Don Byron's hooty clarinet, giving the kind of selfless support you'd be surprised to hear from, say, Cecil Taylor.

DB

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 45

Rather than provide a break from the rowdy proceedings, these songs serve to dilute the potent r&b momentum the Radiators strive so fervently to build. More horns and fewer concessions to mainstream music would have made this album really fly from start to finish. (reviewed on CD) —Dan Ouellette



Courtney Pine

WITHIN THE REALM OF OUR DREAMS—Antilles 422-848 244-2: *ZAIRE; THE SEPIA LOVE SONG; UNA MUY BONITA; DONNA LEE; UP BEHIND THE BEAT; TIME TO GO HOME; DELFEAYO'S DILEMMA; A RAGGAMUFFIN & HIS LANCE; A SLAVE'S TALE*. (53:06)

Personnel: Pine, tenor, soprano sax; Kenny Kirkland, piano; Charnett Moffett, bass; Jeff Watts, drums.

★★★★

Young Courtney Pine came hurling across the drink four years back, veritably steaming with saxophonic prowess and a healthy respect for the "blowing" tradition of John Coltrane, Eric Dolphy, Dewey Redman, and other post-'60s free players. The sheets of sound, biting urgency of tone, and overblown timbres spill out as if time stood still.

Within The Realm Of Our Dreams is Pine's best and most rounded set to date. His fire-breathing fury is dutifully aired and he keeps masterful company; Kirkland, Moffett, and Watts are, expectedly, first-rate, and steeped in the traditions at hand. Material-wise, it's a poised outing. The sprightly contours of Ornette Coleman's "Una Muy Bonita" balance out the *de rigueur* bop calisthenics of Charlie Parker's "Donna Lee"—taken by Pine at a do-or-die clip. Pine goes toe to toe with drummer Watts on "A Raggamuffin & His Lance" (a phallic reference?), with a ferocity reminiscent, again, of Coltrane—this time, Trane's duets with Rashied Ali.

The most pleasant surprise is a rendition of Wynton Marsalis' marvelously squirrely "Delfeayo's Dilemma" (Marsalis' formidable library of tunes ought to be tapped more often). "A Slave's Tale" is Pine's strongest compositional statement, meting out African sonorities and hard-bop swing breaks à la Max Roach. Oddly, it fades out.

Pine, one of the brightest young students of jazz, still hasn't recovered from his '60s lesson plan and charted his own path. But, for now, the mere thrill of his deft blowing may be reward enough. (reviewed on CD)

—Josef Woodard



Bela Fleck & The Flecktones

FLIGHT OF THE COSMIC HIPPO—Warner Bros. 9-26582: *BLU-BOP; FLYING SAUCER DUDES; TURTLE ROCK; FLIGHT OF THE COSMIC HIPPO; THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER; STAR OF THE COUNTY DOWN; JEKYLL AND HYDE (AND TED AND ALICE); MICHELLE; HOLE IN THE WALL; FLIGHT OF THE COSMIC HIPPO (REPRISE)*.

Personnel: Fleck, banjo, electric banjo; Victor Lemonte Wooten, basses; Howard Levy, harmonicas, keyboards; "Future Man" (Roy Wooten), synthaxe drumitar.

★★★★½

It's easy to be a Flecktones fan. This is one of the most colorful fusion bands going, with

individualists on every instrument and their leader's progressive New Grass vision guiding the way. It's not just Bela's banjo sounds lending the Flecktones their uniqueness in the fusion world. Roy Wooten's drum axe gives the percussion a fresh slant, brother Victor's ultra-low bass gives it a futuristic thump, and Howard Levy's "voices" impact the music at every turn.

Fleck's banjo rings like a Stratocaster guitar on the opener, "Blu-Bop," and the band whips lustily through the 5/4 time. The Wootens kick off the whooshing, ticking groove, and Levy's harmonica leads add eeriness to the Americana created by Bela. They come off a bit Dixie Dregs-ish on the effective, slightly schizo "Turtle Rock," and "Jekyll And Hyde (And Ted And Alice)" also moves from calm to frantic. The dirge-like Crescent City stroll of the title track lines up well against the spaghetti western sound of "Star Of The County Down"—while listening I halfway expected to see Lee Marvin or James Coburn ride into the living room on a horse. The band's understated arrangement of our national anthem is reverent enough, but a nice contrast to the recent popular, overblown Whitney Houston version. Their jazz waltz interpretation of Lennon & McCartney's 3/4 ditty, "Michelle," is more flash. This band knows what to do with a good idea, and it has many. (reviewed on cassette)

—Robin Tölleson

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by Frank-John Hadley

Virtually no one invents on the piano with the surety, the orderly reasoning, and the creative illumination of **Cedar Walton**. The middle-aged master has conjured enchanting themes and development for 30-odd years, earning his stripes under J. J. Johnson, Art Farmer, Abbey Lincoln, Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers, and a host of Blue Note session leaders before captaining his own ensembles. Six recent CDs attest to his marvelousness.

Walton, aged 33, emerged from the shadows in 1967 with *Cedar!* (Prestige OJCCD-462-2; 38:00:★★★). The pianist has a delivery that is sprightly and assertive, foursquare and bluesy, his long lines quivering with emotional resonance on four likable originals, Kurt Weill's "My Ship," and Ellington's "Come Sunday" and "A Train" (the latter, an uneasy rendition, appears as a CD exclusive). The illustrious Kenny Dorham plays on most numbers, making his trumpet sing with blues modulations, while tenorman Junior Cook puts in a few passable appearances. Good music, even though the date seems to have been done hurriedly with little or no rehearsal.



Cedar Walton: sprightly and assertive

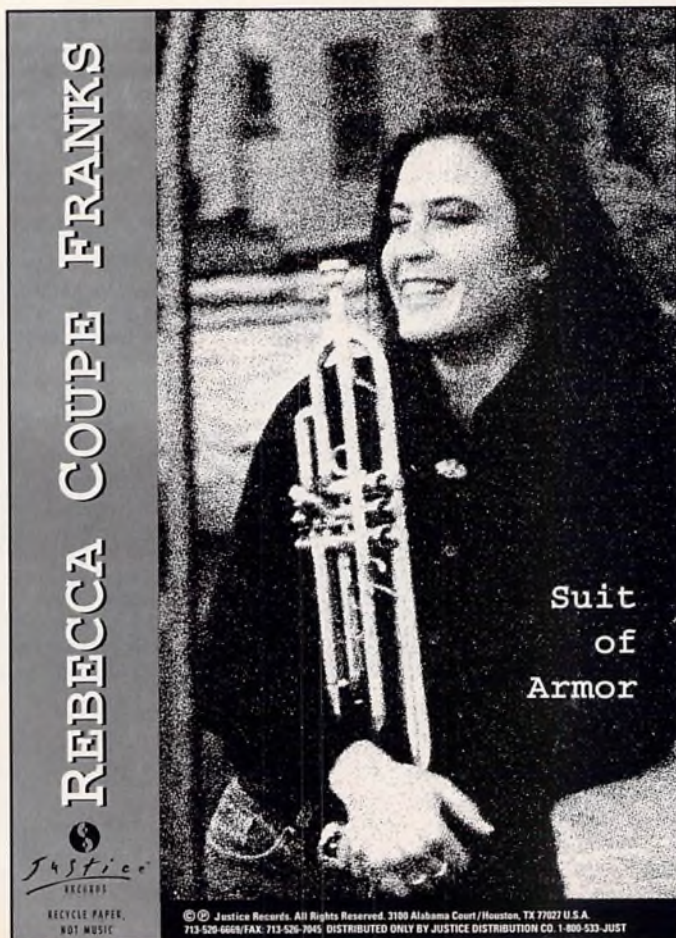
Fast forward to December 1981. A more refined and sagacious Walton sits on piano bench next to Ron Carter and his upright bass in a studio replication of their recent NYC club performances—*Heart & Soul* (Timeless SJP 158; 40:31:★★★★½). The virtuosos' relaxed,

lucid reciprocity on a repertoire of mostly swinging originals ("Back To Bologna" from Walton, two by Carter) and pop or jazz chestnuts (including "My Funny Valentine," "Beautiful Friendship," and John Lewis' debonair "Django") renders the most affecting emotional tones. Simply put, this is outstanding jazz.

As a member of the Timeless All Stars, Walton passed through the portals of San Francisco's Keystone Korner in the spring 1982. *It's Timeless* (Timeless SJP 178; 54:59:★★) suffers no paucity of power hitters, what with vibist Bobby Hutcherson, trombonist Curtis Fuller, and tenor player Harold Land also on the swing-for-the-fences team. Walton gets a fair amount of room to discharge harmonically keen lines that ring with meaning. But crackerjack blowing (Hutcherson stands the tallest) and support (drummer Billy Higgins and bassist Buster Williams) are just agreeable parts of an unsatisfying whole. A set split evenly between standards and originals is a disappointment as the vast writing talents of Walton ("Clockwise"), Hutcherson ("Highway One"), and Williams (zilch) should've been capitalized on. The few arrangements are uninteresting and colorless on this least pleasing of several TAS albums.

Walton's return to the Korner a couple months later as part of a Hutcherson sextet resulted in *Among Friends* (Theresa TR129CD; 61:26:★★★★½), a set of trio and solo numbers the pianist offered patrons before the vibes vizier took over the stage. On Monk's "Off Minor," the roof raiser, Walton is a whirling dervish of ecstasy, with his right-hand out-rushes and left-hand bass clonks shaped and directed by those exceptionally able roisterers Higgins and Williams. The ample display of Walton's musicality throughout the CD takes the sting out of carping about the fusty tune choice.

New releases *Standard Album* (HiBrite ACB-0002; 67:35:★★★★½) and companion Vol. 2 (HiBrite PCB-0003; 56:31:★★★★½), both recorded in a Los Angeles studio on the same day in March 1988 for Japanese consumption, have the piano player and tenured accompa-



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nist Higgins and bassist Pat Senatore—known here as the VIP Trio—breathing life into, you guessed it, clusters of well-traveled songs. Walton wreaks his great spell by playing effortlessly constructed choruses whose wry, radiant, perspicuous tones enunciate fresh revelations in—pick 'em—"Body & Soul" and "Early Autumn" (*Album*) and "Spring Is Here" and "Fly Me To The Moon" (*Vol. 2*). Sometimes catatonia impinges on the listener due to the threesome's coziness with the material, and often a more arresting bass presence is wished for. (Walton's associates Sam Jones, Carter, Buster, and David Williams come fondly to mind.) But the piano nobleman most always keeps us involved with his characteristic combination of lyric grace and heartiness, right thinking and sixth sense. Hear, hear. (HiBrite: 2-2-7, 401 Roppongi Minato-Ku, Tokyo, Japan 106.) (all reviewed on CD) **DB**



Harry Edison

SWING SUMMIT—Candid CCD 79050: *CENTERPIECE*; 'S WONDERFUL; *OUT OF NOWHERE*; *BAG'S GROOVE*; *JUST FRIENDS*; *BLUE CREEK*; *IDAHO*. (63:34)

Personnel: Edison, trumpet; Buddy Tate, tenor sax, clarinet; Frank Wess, tenor sax, flute; Hugh Lawson, piano; Ray Drummond, bass; Bobby Durham, drums.

★ ★ ★

Buddy Tate

THE BALLAD ARTISTRY OF BUDDY TATE—Sackville 3034: *IF WE NEVER MEET AGAIN*; *YESTERDAYS*; *CRY ME A RIVER*; *A FOGGY DAY*; *DARN THAT DREAM*; *A KISS TO BUILD A DREAM ON*; *ISFAHAN*; *GONE WITH THE WIND*; *LAURA*; *B.T. BLUES*. (69:26)
Personnel: Tate, tenor sax, clarinet; Ed Bickert, guitar; Don Thompson, bass; Terry Clarke, drums.

★ ★ ★

Swing Summit, led by Harry Edison, is pretty standard club fare recorded in 1990 at Birdland. If there's nothing extraordinary here, there's still plenty of vigor in the mostly medium-to-up-tempo program. Edison's pure sound and Morris' code-phrasing are as distinctive and immutable as ever Frank Wess and Buddy Tate play predictably well and true to their respective styles as a tenor duo, although there is no ensemble work beyond a few unison turns. It's not their best playing, but they are never less than good. The joker is Tate's clarinet, especially on "Centerpiece" and "Bag's Groove." It has a bitter, lemony sound that becomes irritating in the high register. He holds high notes across several bars, as if they

were intended to be the emotional climax of his solo. But they convey neither content nor emotion. His attack and rhythmic drive on fast tempos sound forced and a bit unsteady on the instrument as well, although his slow blues playing is very satisfying ("Blue Creek"). You may say his clarinet merely transposes the devices of his tenor style. Perhaps. But on tenor he can push hard. On clarinet, the strain shows.

Ballad Artistry is mostly dreamy, breathy, and very lovely saloon tenor. The romantic

sound seems out of fashion these days, save for the rare disciple like Scott Hamilton. Here is a piece of the true cross. Tate takes his time on seven of the 10 tracks (three added from the original LP version); and especially on a pair of duet performances with Ed Bickert that sit like big dirigibles in the air, hovering but barely in motion. Bickert's guitar sounds as fat and romantic as Tate's tenor. There is a lot of good melody on this 1980 session, and without setting any fires, it creates warm feelings. (reviewed on CD) —John McDonough

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1 Michel Camilo

"Impressions" (from *ON THE OTHER HAND*, Epic)
Camilo, piano; Cliff Almond, drums; Michael Bowle, bass.

The pianist is very strong, he's got a great feel for the samba and a great understanding of the drums in relation to the piano as well. I think the pianist is not American. He sounds very at home playing the samba with the two feel. I like the energy a lot. The song is John Coltrane's "Impressions"; but actually before Trane recorded this, Ahmad Jamal played the whole melody, including the original bridge which Coltrane played, which this trio didn't happen to use, on a tune Ahmad recorded called "Excerpt From The Blues" from a 1960 album called *Happy Moods*. And Trane recorded "Impressions" in 1963. I don't recognize anyone in this trio, but for the sheer momentum and excitement they generate, I'll give them five stars.

2 Horace Silver

"Horoscope" (from *HORACE SILVER TRIO*, Blue Note)
Silver, piano; Art Blakey, drums; Gene Ramey, bass.

This is from one of my favorite record dates. It's Horace Silver with the great Art Blakey on drums and it's one of Horace's tunes, "Horoscope." This is a good record for all piano players to check out because both Art Blakey and Horace Silver really epitomize the art of swing. And Horace is able to inject the blues into every piece of music he plays. That feel is the first thing that reaches you, and I think it's the most important element in this music. The affirmation of the spirit of jazz hits you in the first measure.

Horace Silver is one of my personal favorites. Very influential on the whole face of jazz piano. You can hear him using some rhythmic and harmonic elements which really led the way for some things to come. He had his influences, too, people like Monk and Bud Powell, and he obviously came up with a strong church influence. But he was very much an individual, and that's very important in this music, to go for your own sound and your own feeling. That's what the tradition itself is based on, being yourself. So give this one every star you have.

3 Ahmad Jamal

"Dolphin Dance" (from *THE AWAKENING*, Impulse!)
Jamal, piano; Frank Grant, drums; Jamil Nasser, bass.

That was Ahmad Jamal playing Herbie Hancock's "Dolphin Dance." Ahmad Jamal has so much pianistically in reserve at all times. He really held back so admirably on this track. At one point during the performance we heard him do something that probably only Ahmad can do. The way he ran up the

BENNY GREEN

by Bill Milkowski

Pianist Benny Green was born in New York City on April 4, 1963, grew up in Berkeley, California, and began classical piano studies at the age of seven. He was turned on to jazz through his father, a tenor saxophonist with a large record collection. As a teenager, Benny worked in a quintet co-led by trumpeter Eddie Henderson and saxophonist Hadley Caliman. He moved back to New York in the spring of '82 and began studying with Walter Bishop Jr. A year later, he began gigging with Betty Carter and remained with her until 1987, at which point he joined Art Blakey & the Jazz Messengers.

In the fall of 1989 he began working with Freddie Hubbard's quintet. Last year Benny appeared on Bobby Watson's *The Inventor* and had his Blue Note debut with *Lineage*, a trio date with Ray Drummond and Victor Lewis.



CAROL FRIEDMAN

His follow-up on the label, *Greens*, is another trio date featuring drummer Carl Allen and 18-year-old bass sensation Christian McBride. A true student of the music, Benny brought a scholar's insight to his first Blindfold Test.

5 Hank Jones

"Allen's Alley" (from *THE ESSENCE*, DMP)
Jones, piano; Billy Higgins, drums; Ray Drummond, bass.

That was the great Hank Jones on piano, probably the finest pianist playing today. There are others who are equally fine, so I guess taste is really a matter of apples and oranges. But he's such a living treasure. The song was Denzil Best's "Allen's Alley." I had a chance to play with this rhythm section, Ray Drummond and Billy Higgins, a few months ago at Bradley's. It was truly one of the greatest experiences of my life. I was very privileged to be able to play a week there with them, filling in for Hank Jones. There was really an element of telepathy happening with them.

When these guys come on the bandstand they're looking to support, make you feel more comfortable and form a fabric with you. That's real maturity. And sometimes it takes a certain amount of living to get to that level as a human being, where you really look to give and help one another on the bandstand as a family. That's really what the spirit of this music is about. I enjoyed the way Ray answered the melody when they were taking the tune out. Ray really plays with a deep understanding of what the pianist is doing. I sort of think of Ray as a beautiful third hand for a pianist because he has such a deep understanding of music and, once again, he looks to work with you and support. Five stars.

DB

keyboard was so smooth and even, it's breathtaking. One of the greatest pianists of the last half century, for sure. There's a few pianists in jazz I consider as playing perfect piano. I think of Art Tatum, Teddy Wilson, Nat King Cole, Erroll Garner, Ahmad Jamal, Oscar Peterson, and Phineas Newborn. It's a very special thing when you have the ability to play whatever comes to your heart on your instrument. And Ahmad Jamal does that so well. I don't know if you have enough stars to give him, but for the lack of a better number, we'll give him five.

4 Phineas Newborn

"Love For Sale" (from *BACK HOME*, Fantasy)
Newborn, piano; Elvin Jones, drums; Ray Brown, bass.

That's the great one, Phineas Newborn, with Ray Brown on bass and Elvin Jones on drums. This is the album that Stanley Crouch lent me about four years ago, so my apologies to Stanley for not returning it sooner. Phineas had a great understanding of Erroll Garner but he was very much his own man. A master of the blues, a master of time, and a master of the piano. Phineas played differently with Ray and Elvin. I think they made him dig in a little harder and he sure had it within him to give up. Thoroughly enjoyable. A total gas. This is as good as it gets. The true pronunciation of his name was Phine-as, and he was truly the finest. Five stars.