

OB Honors John Carter, Hall of Fame • Bill Cosby, Lifetime Achievement

DOWN BEAT

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WONDER FEVER!

Stevie on composing,
rap rhythms and his hit
Jungle Fever soundtrack

Mingus Is Among Us

Jean Luc Ponty's
Violin Juju

Andy Sheppard's
(Un)formula
for Success





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STEVIE'S

JUNGLE

ADVENTURE

By
James T. Jones IV



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This past summer, Stevie Wonder's soundtrack to Spike Lee's *Jungle Fever* signalled a triumphant return for the keyboard/composer genius who hadn't released an album since 1987's *Characters*. His next release, *Conversation Piece*—put aside during the production of *Fever*—is a masterpiece that recalls his '70s halcyon days.

"I really knew what I wanted to do, and where I wanted each song to fall, and why," said Wonder, holding court in a New York hotel. Weary about the press, he has a DAT recorder running right beside him. "I'm really happy about [the soundtrack]. It reminds me of *Songs In The Key Of Life*, except it's just one album."

Jungle Fever isn't a typical soundtrack, with songs and interludes that only make cinematic sense, traits that brought critical pans of his '79 *Journey Through The Secret Life Of Plants* soundtrack. *Fever* stands on its own as an album with infectious r&b and sentimental ballads. As usual, he's playing a number of instruments. But while the pop world continues to delve deeper into electronics and synthesizers, Wonder has gone the opposite direction with acoustic piano and drums, real strings, and, of course, his trademark harmonica.

This was more than a musical triumph. Notorious for taking years to deliver a recording, Wonder produced the 11 songs of *Jungle Fever* in seven arduous weeks. "There were a lot of skeptical people because Stevie is renowned for Stevie's schedule," said Lee. "But he came through."

"A lot of it really just came from being excited about doing the project," declared Wonder, "and seeing the combination of the potential, the excitement of the collaboration of myself and Spike. I just felt it was going to be an exciting situation, he and I working together for the first time on an all-and-out adventure."

More importantly, the *Fever* soundtrack is reminiscent of his brilliance as a composer, a fact that has endeared him to the jazz world.

An amazingly prolific writer—"I got 200 songs you haven't heard yet"—he's one of the few modern composers who's covered by jazz musicians, and one of the few found in the modern jazz fake book: "Golden Lady," "Another Star," "All In Love Is Fair," "The Sunshine Of My Life." He's been compared to Cole Porter, another non-jazz songwriter who's penned the sort of complex harmonies that beg for interpretation. Wonder is not afraid to use 7th, 9th, and 11th chords, or a measure that bulges with two, three, sometimes four chords.

"He seems to write with those jazz-change harmonies; that's what turns me on," said jazz singer Mark Murphy, who recorded Wonder's "Looking For Another Pure Love" on his 1973 *Mark II* album. "He must have listened to some heavy jazz people when he was young, because you can hear it in his chord progressions."

Murphy wants to record an entire album of Wonder's music, hopefully by next year. "He's never been presented as one of the great American songwriters, which he is."


Wonder tunes have also been recorded by the group Codona (with Don Cherry, the late Collin Walcott, and Nana Vasconcelos), Abbey Lincoln, Phil Woods, Carmen McRae, Grover Washington, Stephane Grappelli, Tuck and Patti, Ramsey Lewis, harmonica player William Galison, pianist Bob Thompson, and trombonist Robin Eubanks. Stanley Turrentine dedicated an entire album to Wonder called *Wonderlove*.

"His tunes got some meat to them," said Phil Woods. (Woods' rendition of "Superwoman" was reissued recently on his *Live* album


on Novus.) "His music is like Ellington's. It goes beyond style. It's not just rock & roll. He's a real musician, not one of these fly-by-night cats. And he has a gift for melody. It's all related to jazz. The roots are the same."

Abbey Lincoln recorded "Golden Lady" as the title track to her '79 release, and "You And I" on her '84 *Talking To The Sun* LP. "He's a great lyricist," she stated. "I'm always attracted to lyrics. They mean more than anything to me. 'Golden Lady,' for me, is a poem to the female God. 'You And I' is a love story to us here on the planet that we have to get along. He has a clear vision of where he is, and what the world is about."

"I think he draws upon the great tradition of black music," asserted Lee. "When I think of jazz, I think of people who are artists that improvise. That's apparent in Stevie's music."



"Something that is kind of avant garde and abstract, if it fits in a certain place, I'll do it. It's the melody that's the key. You want to be able to sing the melody."



Wonder has never made a secret about his love for jazz. His tribute to Duke Ellington, "Sir Duke," with its complicated horn line, hit No. 1 on the pop charts. *Fever* makes a nod toward jazz with the ballad "Make Sure You're Sure," complete with the sounds of acoustic bass, piano, and swishing brushes, a particularly lost sound in pop music.

"I love jazz," said Wonder. "I have a lot of respect for the masters. I grew up with WJZZ-FM in Detroit. I just feel Detroit was the best place to grow up to hear all kinds of music."

"You know who's the baddest piano player? Art Tatum. And he was partially sighted. And I like Branford Marsalis a lot and trumpet players like Miles and Wynton."

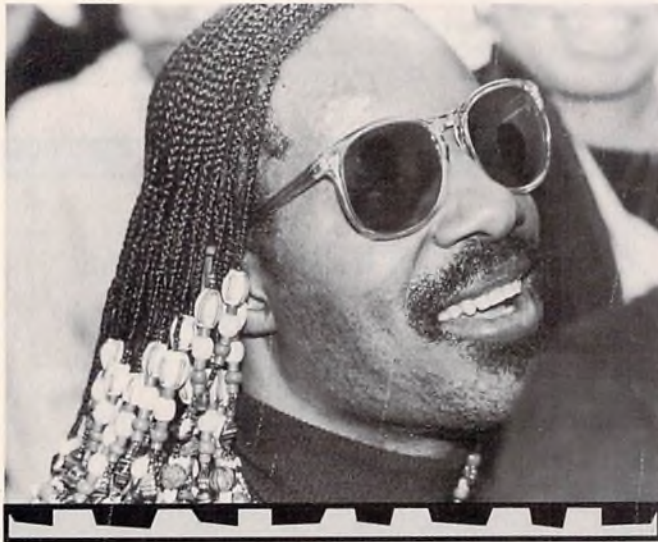
What is his secret for composing? "Emotions," Wonder stated. "In playing tunes like 'Visions' and 'Make Sure You're Sure,' you can almost feel where the emotion is going to be. That influences the words. And then, the chords that come to my mind. They both work together [emotions and chords], and I can't always say what comes first."

With "Ribbon In the Sky," he said, "the song just gets deeper and deeper as you get into it, and as you modulate. It gets more intense. By the time the song is over, you've done the wild thing, and it's over with, and it's wonderful."

"I just play what I think," he declared, never worrying about the confinements and limitations of pop or Top 40 commercialism. "Something that is kind of avant garde and abstract, if it fits in a certain place, I'll do it. It's the melody that's the key. You want to be able to sing the melody."

That certainly describes "Fun Day," a bright and cheery tune. "I hope 'Fun Day' will be in the jazz fake book. I had fun playing that. It's kind of a funny chord thing. It goes from B-flat major 7 to F 11 to B-major 7, to G-flat 7, to E-flat Major 7."

The jazzy "Make Sure You're Sure" is more of a fake book shoo-in, but it has raised some eyebrows. The acoustic bass was sampled. "Every sound that man has made from an instrument is an actual emulation of the sound of the earth," defended Wonder. "The trumpet and trombone is the emulation of the elephant. You have the sounds of drummers emulating thunder. You got the sound of birds, and what's a closer emulation of that but the flute? We've emulated the sounds that we've heard. Now, we have this new technology of sampling a particular sound. You open a lot of doors as far as arrangers and composers."



STEVE KAGAN

Wonder also experiments with mild forms of rap-derived new-jack swing rhythms. He prides himself on having so many eclectic influences. "When you're in the world of music and your ears are open, you're influenced by different sounds that come out."

However, he admitted: "You got some stuff that is kind of processed. A lot of that has to do with record companies, too. It's a funny kind of thing. The artist has to give the sound-alike, a girl that sounds just like Whitney Houston. 'Give me a Mariah Carey.' 'Give me a Stevie Wonder.'"

The *Fever* soundtrack finally gave Wonder the opportunity to record "Lighting Up The Candles," a tribute he had written to longtime pal/singer Marvin Gaye shortly after his death in '84.

In *Jungle Fever*, "I saw this subplot about the preacher dad and his drug-addict son. Lee said he was inspired by Marvin. I said, 'I have a song that was also inspired by Marvin.' I ended the soundtrack with it. It was a blowout. There were so many times, I would start playing it and would start crying, so I didn't want to mess with that song for a long time. Ultimately, this film came along and it felt like the right place to play it."

He says he's just about finished with his next album, *Conversation Piece*. What has been taking so long?

"The technology. I was still learning it. I'm into learning new things and knowing about how to use the new synthesizers and computers. It takes time to perfect it to the way you feel like it's you. I've taken the time and studied a lot, experimented and came up with a lot of songs."

"*Conversation Piece* has some different grooves and subject matter. I got a song called 'Legal Drug Dealer' and 'Ms. And Mr.

Little One,' and one called 'Greenhouse Effect.'

His creative juices are flowing now. "Working on the *Fever* film has opened a lot of things up for me," he said. The Lee/Wonder collaboration is a bit surprising, considering Lee usually relies on jazz musicians to score his films, particularly his father, bassist Bill Lee. But he bypassed dad ("Got tired of working with each other") for Wonder. Why? "The theme of the movie, about man's inability to work and live together in peace with his brother and sister, has been one of Stevie's main themes through his music," said Lee.

The collaboration was not without its difficult moments. "Once a song was finished it became a discussion of where songs should be placed," said Lee. "We had several disagreements. You had two very creative, strong-willed people who had definite opinions. But what made it work was that we both realized what was best for the movie."

The two had originally met in '86 during Wonder's "Square Circle" tour. Wonder wrote the tune "I Can Only Be Me" for Lee's *School Daze* soundtrack. "I did the music because I have great admiration for Spike Lee," said Wonder. "I also did it because we've become very good friends."

Lee had been a longtime admirer: "In my high school yearbook, I used lyrics from one of his songs. Here it is, years later, and I'm working with him. That's the best thing I'm able to do: to tap into great black artists like [trumpeter] Terence Blanchard [playing in the movie score], Wynton, and Stevie. I feel we are the greatest artists on this earth."

Would Wonder ever do a straight-up jazz album? "I want to learn how to play a little better piano. Give me a few more years and I'll be ready to go for it." **DB**



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EQUIPMENT

Stevie Wonder never travels without his Yamaha KX-88 synthesized controller, and/or his Roland A-50. He also uses a Roland A-80. For sampling, he uses a Synclavier or a Wave Frame. Wonder recently purchased an Ensoniq SQ-2 Personal Music Studio. He also endorses and uses the Akai A-DAM Multi-Track Recording System. He plays a chromatic harmonica, and has many others that are custom-made.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

- | | |
|---|---|
| JUNGLE FEVER (soundtrack) — Motown MOTD-6291 | HOTTER THAN JULY — Motown MOTD-9064 |
| CHARACTERS — Motown-MOTD-6248 | JOURNEY THROUGH THE SECRET LIFE OF PLANTS — Motown MOTD2-6127 |
| IN SQUARE CIRCLE — Motown MOTD-6134 | SONGS IN THE KEY OF LIFE — Motown MOTD2-340 |
| THE WOMAN IN RED (soundtrack) — Motown MOTD-6108 | FULFILLINGNESS: FIRST FINALE — Motown MOTD-332 |
| ORIGINAL MUSIQUARIUM: GREATEST HITS — Motown MOTD2-6002 | INNERVISIONS — Motown MOTD-326 |
| WITH A SONG IN MY HEART — Motown MOTC-5150 | TALKING BOOK — Motown MOTD-319 |

Keeping Time

Down Beat's 1991 Hall of Fame and Lifetime Achievement Awards

In 1952, Down Beat originated the Hall of Fame with the intent to achieve “international importance as a yardstick of true immortality among the greats of music.” The editors instructed DB’s readers to “vote for anybody from Bach to Bing Crosby as the number 1 music personality of all time.”

Neither Bach nor Bing fared very well then—they came in seventh and ninth, respectively. In fact, Louis Armstrong became the first inductee. But the readers’ choices have become an excellent barometer of what has been on their collective minds—be it the passing of great artists like Charlie Parker (elected in '55) and Jimi Hendrix ('70) or recognizing decades of great musicmaking by folks like Ella Fitzgerald ('79) and Lionel Hampton ('87).

Likewise, the Critics Poll—critics began making selections in 1961 by choosing Coleman Hawkins—has shown a response not only to deaths and long-term musical achievement, but also by recognizing pioneers ranging from King Oliver ('76) and Johnny Dodds ('87) to Cecil Taylor ('75) and Sun Ra ('84). Does it provide a “yardstick of true immortality” or a naming of “the number 1 musical personality”? Well, no. But it does continue to reflect the changing concerns of our readers and critics, the dynamics of a changing musical world, and the enduring contributions of individuals. While neither Bach nor Bing received any votes this year, we proudly welcome the late John Carter, composer and instrumentalist, to the ranks of the music’s greatest.

Not everyone who adds to our enjoyment of the music plays or sings. DB established the Lifetime Achievement Award in 1981 to recognize the work of those—like its first winner, producer John Hammond—who contribute from the wings. To the ranks of producers, engineers, educators, and writers, we proudly add the foremost cheerleader of jazz, Bill Cosby.

—Dave Holland



LAUREN DEUTSCH



NATIONAL BROADCASTING CO

John Carter's Deep Roots

John Carter's election to the Down Beat Hall of Fame so shortly after his death at age 61 this spring (see "Final Bar" June '91) might look like one more sad example of an artist getting his due only posthumously. Happily, that wasn't the case. Carter, having done more than any other player to adapt the clarinet to post-Ornette Coleman-improvised music, got to see the re-emergence of the instrument in modern jazz. He also lived to complete the epic masterwork that occupied most of his time in the 1980s—the five-album series of works for octet, *Roots And Folklore: Episodes In The Development Of American Folk Music*—and to witness the first wave of appreciation which greeted it.

Carter called his series "Roots And Folklore" because it dealt with some of the cultural sources that helped shape American music, beginning in Africa before the slave trade and working up to modern times—that's the "roots"—and because, like all folklore, it re-imagines the past in light of the needs of the present. Its five volumes are the 1982 *Dawhe* (Black Saint), *Castles Of Ghana*, *Dance Of The Love Ghosts*, *Fields*, and 1989's *Shadows On A Wall* (the last four are on Gramavision). As Carter explained to this writer in a 1989 interview, *Dawhe* celebrates a West African people enjoying life before the upheavals of the slave trade. *Castles Of Ghana* deals with the holding pens for slaves on the Gold Coast, and the complicity of Africans in that trade; *Dance Of The Love Ghosts* chronicles the nightmarish middle passage to America, the breakup of families and slave life itself. *Fields* is about African-Americans' rural heritage, while *Shadows On A Wall* looks at the great migration to the northern cities and the emergence of urban black culture.

Conceptually, *Roots And Folklore* is a successor to other African-American historical suites, Duke Ellington's 1943 *Black, Brown And Beige* and Max Roach's 1960 *Freedom Now Suite*. As with those projects, the subject is historical, but the music is decidedly modern—the harmonies are appropriately expansive, bracingly dissonant, and the octet interaction is a billowing, polyrhythmic cauldron. But the music's fresh and lyrical, too, balancing roughhewn and transparent textures.

In a sense, the earthy/elegant character of Carter's octet is an extension of his clarinet sound. More than any other major stylist, he was determined to exploit the clarinet's major pitfall, its tendency to squeal. He made an informal science out of discovering false fingerings that let him play notes far above the clarinet's textbook range. "My fascination with the clarinet is



MICHAEL WILDERMAN

its tremendous range, its ability to change colors, from deep low notes to shrill highs," he told me. "You can make great music between those extremes."

The octet suites aside, Carter recorded in several contexts in the '80s. The co-op quartet Clarinet Summit (with Alvin Batiste, Jimmy Hamilton, and bass clarinetist David Murray) is documented on two albums from a New York concert (now on one CD from India Navigation) and a studio date, *Southern Bells* (Black Saint). In 1988 he made a final small-group album with his longtime partner (and octet member), cornetist Bobby Bradford, though John insisted that *Comin' On* (hat ART), on which they received equal billing, was really Bradford's date. Four performances Carter and Bradford recorded in 1969 are on the recent CD anthology *West Coast Hot* (RCA/Novus). Carter's last recordings, from December '89, were as a sideman on pianist Horace Tapscott's two-volume *The Dark Tree* (hat ART).

As either a clarinetist or composer, John Carter would be assured a niche in jazz history. His dual contributions make him one of the most significant jazz musicians of our time. —Kevin Whitehead

Bill Cosby—Jazz Cheerleader

Bill Cosby is one of America's best-known and best-loved comedians. The star of NBC's highly rated sitcom *The Cosby Show*, he's also the author

of best-selling books, an educator with a doctorate from U. Mass at Amherst, and an ubiquitous barker for Kodak and Jello. But before he became a successful entertainer, Bill Cosby played jazz, and, after all these years, the great passion of Cosby's life is jazz. It's for this passion and his active encouragement of jazz musicians that he's earned the Down Beat Lifetime Achievement Award.

Cosby first appreciated jazz in the '50s as a teenager in Philadelphia. He played drums and came up musically among some of the brightest musicians of the Philadelphia scene—Archie Shepp, Reggie Workman, Lee Morgan, Benny Golson. He worked with organ trios—once with Jimmy Smith—and his first regular gig was the Charlie Chissom band. "We played all the latest hits. My whole thing was to drive and kick and push—but all I may have been was just loud!"

After attending Temple University and switching from music to comedy, he settled in New York where, in the '60s in joints around the Village, music and comedy often came together. "I came out of the coffeehouses working with folk singers and blues singers. And the whole idea for me was to incorporate a jazz feeling with what I was doing."

Along with the popularity of Cosby's comedy albums came his breakthrough as an actor on the television series *I Spy* with Robert Culp. He went on to star in other series, concerts, and movies such as *Uptown Saturday Night* and the recent *Ghost Dad*.

Whatever he's doing as an entertainer, jazz is a constant in Cosby's life; he uses jazz musicians in his work whenever possible. As guest-host of *The Tonight Show*, his guests have included Wynton Marsalis, Tony Williams, and, on one memorable show, Sonny Rollins playing solo. Quincy Jones was musical director for Cosby's first sitcom and jazz greats like Cannonball Adderley and Roland Kirk played on the soundtrack. Nowadays on *The Cosby Show*, working with his longtime musical friend Stu Gardner, Cosby calls jazz artists to perform and even act. Joe Williams, Nancy Wilson, Max Roach, Tito Puente, Dizzy Gillespie, B.B. King, and Betty Carter have all appeared. "I just need a story line for my writers, then we bring the musicians on and we play it. Some of the works of Dizzy, Max Roach, Art Blakey, I want to keep on our show—because that's who Cliff Huxtable is and what he's about."

Away from the show, Cosby's just as involved around the scene. He's the perennial host of the Playboy Jazz Festival in Hollywood and the last two years has hosted and even conducted the orchestra for the "Beacons of Jazz" concerts at the New School in New York. He's contributed his



GENE MARTIN

time and talent to a variety of jazz benefits, including his support of jazz on the radio. He's often lent his name to WBGO in Newark and WRTI in Philadelphia. This spring he performed several concerts to benefit the Apollo Theatre and hosted an all-star celebration of Charlie Parker at the

Village Gate to benefit the Veritas rehabilitation center.

And at last in 1990, Bill Cosby the jazz lover became again Bill Cosby the jazz musician with two albums for Verve. He conceived and, with Stu Gardner, arranged the avant-fusion music of *Where You Lay Your Head* and, working with Bobby Watson, created unique variations of Monk, Ellington, and other classics on the recent release *My Appreciation*.

And meanwhile, when he's not performing he's usually enjoying his musical friends performing—and often ends up on stage anyway. He's played drums and vibes with Lionel Hampton, sung with Joe Williams, and during a recent stand at the Village Vanguard, jammed comedically with Jackie McLean. He's played cowbell with Tito Puente at the Village Gate and even played a solo on Tito's timbales—though more in the style of Philly Joe Jones than clave. "I call myself a fan who can execute. I'm not at the level of playing where anyone would hire me, but I've played with some people that would make even a sho-nuff musician raise eyebrows. Obviously, all of this is because I am Bill Cosby—but I'll take it!"

—Michael Bourne

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Mingus Is Among Us

MINGUS DYNASTY

By Bill Shoemaker

Usually, a musician just gets a phone call to join a band or make a gig. But, for tenor titan George Adams, being part of the new, regenerated Mingus Dynasty has proven to be more than just another gig; and, the call he received was anything but usual.

"I had a dream where Charles appeared to me and said, 'You're going to get a call to come and play with the Dynasty. Don't worry about it. Just play the music like you played with me,'" Adams related at the top of an informal, freewheeling roundtable discussion of Mingus, his music, and his legacy, held last June at Wolf Trap, prior to a performance of Mingus' *Epitaph* (see "Reviews" July '90). Adams and the other members of the Dynasty, *sans* pianist John Hicks and drummer Marvin "Smitty" Smith, were joined by Mingus' widow, Sue Graham Mingus. "And two days later," Adams remarked, "Sue called for a gig at Fat Tuesday's."

For bassist Ray Drummond—perhaps the most complete musician to hold the bass chair in a band widely viewed to have de-emphasized Mingus the bassist in past editions—the close encounter came on the bandstand at the Village Vanguard during his first week with the Dynasty.

"It was amazing because I knew the danger for any bassist playing Mingus' music is to take the easy way out and try to sound like him; but, I found the things I had heard from Charles just coming out. I felt that Mingus' hand was really on me, saying, 'Listen, youngblood, I'm going to show you something about my music here.' I went, 'Whoa, wait a minute, this is me here.' I had

George Adams brings it home.

"LIVING, BREATHING PLAYERS"

“I think it’s a marvelous group,” Gunther Schuller said of Mingus Dynasty before rehearsing the Epitaph Orchestra for its recent performance at Wolf Trap. “I’m happy they exist to keep Mingus’ music really alive, because I’m of the persuasion that music that only exists on recordings, as wonderful as that may be, eventually disappears or dies. Jazz, particularly, has to be kept alive by living, breathing players. Since Mingus’ compositions are so important to the whole history of jazz, what the Mingus Dynasty is doing to keep that legacy, that particular tradition alive is terribly, terribly important. Since George Adams and Jack Walrath played with Mingus during the last years of his life, they have as good a sense of how he would want the music played as anyone.

“However, there is something of a joker in the deck. Like all great jazz composers, Mingus was wont to change his music, to have new ideas about it, new perspectives. Nobody can predict or guess how Mingus might now interpret a composition like ‘Haitian Fight Song’ 30 years after it was first played. But, Mingus Dynasty has a balance of keeping the music fresh and renewed in the true jazz spirit while preserving the basic work.”

—B.S.



CARLA GAHR

Sue Mingus with the Mingus Dynasty: (clockwise from lower left) John Hicks, Victor Lewis, Jack Walrath, Alex Foster, George Adams, Ray Drummond, and Craig Handy.



MICHAEL WILDERMAN

“The challenge is for performers to pull music out of themselves.”

to bring it to that conscious level so that I could start operating with my own identity and personality.”

Identity and personality are concepts that continually crop up when Dynasty members talk about the band’s current strengths. They are a musician’s only talismans for not being overwhelmed by Mingus, who was so much larger than life that he remains an

imposing figure a decade after his death. They are qualities so abundantly present on their latest recording, *The Next Generation*, that the recordings of earlier editions of the band pale beside it (see “Reviews” Aug. ’91).

“It was kind of lost there for a few years, frankly,” trumpeter and musical director Jack Walrath opined. “The Dynasty became a

repertory band in the wrong sense, trying to recreate something with too much reading music and too much conducting, whereas that was not what it was about when I played with Charles.

“What we do is not just a matter of recreating a feeling—we do things the way *we* do things. Take a tune like ‘Sue’s Changes,’ which has a half-dozen rhythm changes, meter changes, and all kinds of stretched-out parts. We took it out, rehearsed it one day, and that’s that. We don’t need someone conducting, counting out each bar. The looseness is what the tune’s about.”

“Mingus wanted the music to be unpredictable, even though it was charted out,” Adams interjected. “Charles realized music was moving beyond notation, that notation was really kind of a road map that you use to navigate. Somewhere along the way, you’re going to find yourself in some uncharted area—that’s where your individuality comes in. That’s what makes the music so valuable.”

“In the introduction to the *Mingus More Than A Fake Book* [Jazz Workshop/Hal Leonard],” Sue Mingus continued, “Andrew Homzy, the musicologist who discovered *Epitaph* in Charles’ effects, points out that unlike the pieces by Charles’ contemporar-

ies, there is often no fixed format, lead sheets that are composite renderings, components of the pieces that are assembled for a practical or simplified representation of the piece. That's why the music can be opened up by individual musicians, which is what Charles was after. He wrote for musicians who get inside the music and bring their own soul, musically, into it, which is why the music is alive today."

The way Mingus would bring a tune into rehearsal was completely different than most composers," said Walrath. "Stan Kenton brings in a chart for a big band and you're going to play it and that's the way you're going to play it for the next 25 years. It's all arranged, all fixed. But, with Mingus, the piece wasn't complete until we played it.

"Mingus' music is compositional. It's *composed* music—it's not just changes, but written parts that are to be played a certain way. And, it's also *conversational* in the way the parts relate to each other. So, it's compositional."

"That's always the test of good material," posited Drummond, "that the challenge is there for the performers to pull music out of themselves that they might not have even considered. The way I see it, the idea of the Dynasty is that through Mingus' repertoire one is able to project one's individual personality in unexpected, interesting ways."

"I think that's a reason a lot of people miss the point of this band. It's not about repetition," suggested tenor saxophonist Craig Handy. "Like having three tenors. Mingus didn't score the music that way. But, you can't have too many tenors. Besides, each of us is so different that all of us can solo one after another and it's still interesting."

"The tenor has a strong tradition of individuality," concurred Alex Foster, who rounds out the tenor section. "Go back to Don Byas, Ben Webster, and Coleman Hawkins—there's always been a wide variety of styles at any one time."

"And we have the burning desire to grow within the music, which is a very rare level of musicianship," said Adams. "Some cats play the music to a point and then stagnate. That's not the case with this edition of the Dynasty. That's what I like about it—that burning desire to play the music."

"I very much resent, and think that it's a misnomer, that somehow this is a so-called ghost band," stated Drummond. "I think that term really misrepresents the point, and does a disservice to jazz as a classical music."



Drummond, Marvin "Smitty" Smith, and Eric Mingus listen to a playback.

"One thing that symphonic music has done is preserve its heritage, by deifying, as it were, the written score. There's a legacy, a continuum there, it's been codified for succeeding generations. There might be arguments about interpretation, but at least they have scores to argue over.

"My feeling is that there should be repertory companies to preserve jazz as a classical music, but they should go about that in an appropriate way. I think Mingus Dynasty does that."

"I resent the idea that somehow this is a ghost band. I think that term really misrepresents the point, and does a disservice to jazz as a classical music."



"If Bach and Mozart were around today," asserted Sue Mingus, "they would be looking around for musicians in the Five Spot or the Blue Note, musicians who can transpose and improvise and create interesting backgrounds to melody lines, musicians who don't just play notes like you're taught in music school. Jazz musicians."

"But Mingus' music will never be museum music," pronounced Adams.

Amen.

DB

EQUIPMENT

Jack Walrath plays an Opera trumpet and a Cousesnon flugelhorn, using a Bach 2½ mouthpiece on both. He composes at a Yamaha KX 88-TX7 sound generator. George Adams uses Selmer 80 Super Action Series II tenor and soprano saxes, using an Otto Link hard-rubber #8 mouthpiece and Rico 3½ reeds on the tenor, and a Selmer #3 mouthpiece and Selmer 2½ reeds on the soprano. He plays an Artley flute and composes at a Winter grand piano.

Craig Handy's tenor is a Selmer Mark VI, which he uses with an Otto Link 8 Star mouthpiece, and his alto is a 1929 Conn 6M, with a Morgan mouthpiece. He uses medium-hard La Voz reeds with both. He uses a Buffet clarinet with a HS Star mouthpiece and Van Doren #3 reeds. Alex Foster plays Selmer Mark VI tenor and soprano saxes. He uses a Lamberson mouthpiece and

Van Doren #2½ reeds with the tenor, an Otto Link #8 mouthpiece, and Rico #3 reeds with the soprano. He also has a Zetner piccolo and Korg T-1 keyboard.

Ray Drummond's bass was made 120 years ago by School Vuillaume. He uses Thomastik Dominant strings, a Barcus Berry 1424 pickup, a Walter Woods M1-100-8 amp head, and Bose 802 Series II speakers. Marvin "Smitty" Smith has several kits, each tailored for specific settings. With Mingus Dynasty, he uses a Ludwig 6½ × 14-inch bronze shell snare, and Pearl MLX Drums: 14 × 18-inch bass, 14 × 14-inch floor tom, 8 × 12-inch and 9 × 13-inch tom toms. His cymbals are Zildjian: 14-inch New Beat hi-hats, 22-inch K light ride, 18-inch K dark crash, 16- and 15-inch A light crashes.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

Mingus Dynasty

THE NEXT GENERATION—Columbia 47405
MINGUS' SOUNDS OF LOVE—Soul Note 121-142
REINCARNATION—Soul Note 1042
LIVE AT MONTREUX—Atlantic 1 6031

Jack Walrath

GUT FEELINGS—Muse 5422
MASTERS OF SUSPENSE—Blue Note 46905

George Adams

(upcoming title on Blue Note)
AMERICA—Blue Note 93896
NIGHTINGALE—Blue Note 91984

Craig Handy

SPLIT SECOND TIMING—Arabesque 01010

John Hicks

POWER TRIO—Novus 3115
LIVE AT MAYBECK RECITAL HALL—Concord Jazz 4442

Ray Drummond

THE ESSENCE—DMP/Telarc 480
CAMERA IN A BAG—Criss Cross 1040

Marvin "Smitty" Smith

THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED—Concord Jazz 379
KEEPER OF THE DRUMS—Concord Jazz 325

Violin Juju

JEAN LUC PONTY

By John Diliberto

Jean Luc Ponty has always been a musician quick to spot trends, create a formula, and capitalize. After an early career in mainstream jazz and a stab at the avant garde, he jumped from Frank Zappa's Mothers of Invention and John McLaughlin's Mahavishnu Orchestra in the mid-'70s to form his own successful fusion ensemble. When MIDI-controllers and synthesizers came in, especially the Synclavier, Ponty plugged in for his own techno-jazz. And now that the winds of world music are in the air, Ponty has leaped on board for his most unusual album in 15 years, *Tchokola*.

With *Tchokola*, the French violinist has returned to his homeland, Paris, to ingest the music of another homeland, Africa. Of the thriving world-music scene in Paris, where musicians from Africa live, play, and record, Ponty—who has been living in the United States for years—was totally unaware.

While most Western musicians are drawn to the rhythmic possibilities of African music, Ponty listened to the singers and melodies. "Thinking of Africa, I thought immediately of rhythms like most people," he said. "But I was very aware of the richness of the melodies as well. I first discovered the singers from West Africa, like Morey Kante and Salif Keita, and their style just carried me. The beauty of their voices and also the lyrics that I heard in their music was quite a surprise to me 'cause I was not really familiar with modern African musicians."

But being inspired by a music and finding a way to incorporate it into your own art can be two different things. Instead of writing African-derived music, Ponty decided to play the music itself, using compositions and forms from Senegal, Mali, Cameroon, and finding a way to fit in with his violin. This meant that he gave over the



compositional chores to the musicians he assembled for the album, with the help of African composer and session musician Wally Badarou.

"My concept for the album at first was to cover material," Ponty said. "I really didn't want to write material, especially since it's not my music. I didn't feel comfortable doing it. I was only going to cover existing material, songs written by African composers, but the African musicians I was playing with explained that they create new material based on traditional dance rhythms anyway." Some of those grooves include Danzi styles from West Cameroon, Mandingo rhythms from West Africa, and *juju* style from Nigeria.

So rather than an album of cover tunes, Ponty only used two songs, "Ye Ke Ye Ke" by Kante and "Cono" by Keita. The rest came out of jam sessions. Ponty went to Paris and jammed, took the tapes back home to L.A., and lived with them for a few months. After a while, he gained enough confidence to write four melodies for the album, but the bulk of the compositions are from the players themselves.

Hearing the album, that should come as no surprise. On the juju-based "Sakka Sakka," the rhythms bubble and bounce like a chatter of insects with complex, cross-picking guitar melodies and counter-rhythms. Several tracks feature vocal chanting.

"Thinking of Africa, I thought immediately of rhythms, but I was very aware of the richness of the melodies as well."



Many of the tracks turned into interwoven collaborations. In the process of jamming together, ideas would flow back and forth. "Bamako' came out, I believe, by accident," he recalled. "At the jam session at one point, the musicians were just toying with their instruments without really consciously trying to play something together. I remember picking up my violin and starting to pluck the strings on the piece we were doing." On "Bamako," he picks his violin for muted, harp-like tones that imitate the sound of the 21-stringed kora, weaving a melodic rhythm with the real kora of Kemo Kouyate (De Conakry).

Unlike Ponty's heavily produced, often synthesizer-generated recordings of the recent past, *Tchokola* was born in the studio, with the bulk of the ensemble playing live, creating arrangements on the spot. "I wanted to get that live feel which is such an asset of their music," asserted the violinist. "And to have the interaction of improvisation. I did not want a super-arranged or super-produced record. I wanted them to make sure to keep it simple and as spontaneous as they usually play in their own countries."

Ponty is no stranger to complex meters. His own groups are noted for their rhythmic dexterity and he could negotiate the changes of a Zappa ditty as well as free jazz. Yet, he was challenged by the rhythmic brew these musicians could create. "I must tell you that some of these rhythms were the most intricate I had to deal with in my life," he admitted. "There are several grooves going on at the same time in most of the pieces, but they feel so natural, and it's really dance music that anyone can groove on. And when I jammed with the musicians for the first time, that was really what happened. I was hearing one rhythm and I would weave into that and improvise with that rhythm, and then I would switch to the other rhythm I would hear."

But Ponty, trained as a classical musician and playing Western music for his entire life, still had to contend with a different conception of rhythm and time. "I really had to get some help from these musicians to explain to me where the beats were because the



downbeat is impossible to get. They don't play what is for us the strong beat."

These new rhythms forced Ponty to play in a different way. Rather than use his custom of constructing solos that build to a crescendo, he weaves in and out of the mix. It's a change that some would say is a long time coming, among them Ponty's former employer, Frank Zappa. In his recent autobiography, *The Real Frank Zappa Book* (Poseidon Press), Zappa talks about musicians who like to play solos so they can obtain sexual favors. "One way you insure that you look like the greatest thing going when you play your big solo, is to make sure that you end your solo by going up the scale, then grab that last note and repeat it as fast as you can," writes Zappa. "In the case of violinist Jean Luc Ponty, who was with the band briefly in the early '70s, no matter what the solo was, after a certain period of time

on the road, he always ended with the same passage. He'd wiggle up to the top of the instrument and squirt all over the place on the last note. And the crowd went wild."

Ponty is taken aback when I relate this quote to him. "Well, I can't remember if I was thinking about girls at the time, but I probably knew how to get a crowd basically. That's what it sounds to me like. Although it's funny he refers to me as doing that. I don't even remember how I played at the time."

Ponty hopes to take this music on the road in the fall, where he feels the true spirit of the music will emerge. "This is really a music to be enjoyed live, as well as on a record," he enthused. "What attracted me with this African music was its spontaneity. It's usually played for hours and hours, they improvise on and on. This is the nature of this music." DB

EQUIPMENT

Ponty's main violins are a classical Italian instrument made in 1790 by Ceruti from Cremona. For electric music he plays two Zeta violins, one blue and one black. He uses Lexicon LXP-1 and LXP-5s for digital reverb and delays. In his home

studio, Ponty composes with a Synclavier 11 music system and an Akai S900 Sampler. He mixes on a TAC Matchless Console and monitors on Electro-Voice EV Sentry 100s and Saras speakers.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader

TCHOKOLA — Epic 47378
 STORYTELLING — Columbia 45252
 THE GIFT OF TIME — Columbia 40983
 FABLES — Atlantic 81276
 OPEN MIND — Atlantic 80185
 INDIVIDUAL CHOICE — Atlantic 80098
 CIVILIZED EVIL — Atlantic 16020
 MYSTICAL ADVENTURES — Atlantic 19333
 A TASTE FOR PASSION — Atlantic 19253
 LIVE — Atlantic 19229

COSMIC MESSENGER — Atlantic 19189
 IMAGINARY VOYAGE — Atlantic 19136
 ENIGMATIC OCEAN — Atlantic 19110
 AURORA — Atlantic 18163
 UPON THE WINGS OF MUSIC — Atlantic 18138

with the Mahavishnu Orchestra

APOCALYPSE — Columbia 32957
 VISIONS OF THE EMERALD BEYOND — Columbia 46867
 with Frank Zappa & the Mothers of Invention
 OVERNITE SENSATION — Rykodisc 40025

Persistence and The Big Break

ANDY SHEPPARD

By Kevin Whitehead

The setting is England, circa 1986. The climate toward jazz has become more receptive. It's here that he gets his big break—"my Warhol moment," saxophonist Andy Sheppard said with a laugh. "Reluctantly, I entered this contest—the Schlitz Jazz Competition—which gave me 10 minutes on television. I couldn't get excited about it. Backstage, everyone else was really nervous, but as for me—well, it probably had a lot to do with hanging out with the Rastafarian security man at the stage door."

Sheppard walked out and blew a furious soprano solo—and promptly lost, finishing second to the sax quartet Itchy Fingers. But somebody from Island Records saw and liked his imposing performance, and their Antilles subsidiary offered him a five-record deal.

"Suddenly, boom. I'd been kicking around for 10 years, and I was ready."

Clearly, it's performing live in front of an audience that brings out Sheppard's best. At a recent Knitting Factory date with pianist Keith Tippett, Andy began the duo's first set on soprano, with folksy little melodies that betrayed his wool-dyed Englishness (he was born a few miles from Stonehenge), gradually moving into corkscrewing scribbles that recalled countryman Evan Parker without sounding like a ripoff. Switching to tenor, Sheppard breathed loudly through the reed, so all you heard was the *krisssh* of air squeezed through a small aperture, a sound akin to brushes on a snare drum. There was vibrato, and dynamics, and



rhythm, but no identifiable pitch. Many tenor players pay tribute to Ben Webster's breathiness, but Sheppard's one of the few to take that attack to the same extremes Ben did.

But Sheppard's borrowings are motivated by simple pragmatism—I'll play *this* because it will work *here*—and not by a desire to pay homage to the masters or establish quote-unquote proper jazz credentials.

"I've had suggestions that I should come to America and play with a rhythm section, play more straightahead, to prove I can play," he said over coffee in the lobby of his hotel. (His hair may be tough-Marine short, but he's open, amiable, and soft-spoken.) In other words, folks want him to do the kind of American tour fellow-English saxman (and Antilles stablemate) Courtney Pine does.

"But I don't see any point in doing that. Without any disrespect to the tradition, it doesn't make much sense for me to try and behave like a New Yorker. I mean, it's just owning up that I come from England, and there's a whole tradition of British jazz music [to tap into]. People I used to see when I first started playing, like pianist Stan Tracey and tenor saxophonist Don Weller—British jazz musicians—were very inspiring to me."

Looking at some of the press that an English *wunderkinder* like Pine gets on both sides of the Atlantic, you'd think the Isles had just discovered modern jazz. In fact, Britain in the '60s had a very rich scene, spurred on by players like the Monk-inspired Tracey, the West Indian altoist Joe Harriott (who developed a freebop concept parallel

to, contemporary with, but independent of Ornette's), the burning hard-bop tenorist Tubby Hayes, soprano men John Surman and Lol Coxhill, who let English pastoral sensibilities infuse their music, free players like Tippett and Parker, and South African émigrés like the late pianist Chris McGregor and drummer Louis Moholo. Sheppard knows the history of that scene, and has played, mostly informally, with some of its veterans, like Parker, Coxhill, Tracey, trumpeter Harry Beckett, and saxophonist Elton Dean.

The 43-year-old Tippett is the only one Sheppard's played with regularly, over the last couple of years. "I'm not a champion for the avant garde in general," Andy said. "But I love playing all sorts of music, and free improvisation is part of what I do. Keith and I just started doing these duets and found we had some kind of vocabulary for it. It was easy.

"But really I'm between two camps. I'm a generation away from guys like Keith or Evan Parker, and a generation away from musicians in their 20's like Steve Williamson and Jason Rebello."

By the standards of today's jazz, Andy Sheppard was a late bloomer—he didn't make his first album as a leader until he was 30, in 1987. "But that's a good thing, really, because I did spend 10 years serving my apprenticeship—i.e., with no gigs, no money, struggling and hustling." He'd gotten bit by the jazz bug at age 19, when pianist Geoff Williams played him some Mingus and late-period Coltrane records. He taught himself tenor, and took up soprano two years later. Around that time, he made his first recording, in Williams' group Sphere (not to be confused with the American quartet of the same name).

Sheppard moved to London from Salisbury a decade or so ago, but didn't stay long. "At that time there was nothing happening in jazz. There was no press interest in the generation we'd just been talking about—Evan Parker, Stan Tracey. I really wanted to come to New York, but that was a problem because it's expensive, and I didn't have any money, and there's all this work-permit shit. So I took the cheap alternative and went to Paris." There he worked with the surrealist performance troupe Urban Sax ("If you lived in Paris and played the saxophone, chances are you'd work with Urban Sax at some point") and recorded with the big band of Laurent Cugny. He returned to Cugny's Big Band Lumiere briefly in 1987 for part of a European tour with Gil Evans, but that's getting ahead of the story.

Back in England in '86 when Sheppard sealed his Island recording contract, he must have surprised people when he used the



END FARBBER

freedom the label gave him to assemble a band of unknown buddies, three Englishmen and a percussionist from Sierra Leone. Big names are fine, he says, but he wanted players who could commit to roadwork. Sheppard's first two albums were just okay—*Andy Sheppard* mostly showed off his pretty soprano tone in not very challenging settings (see "Reviews" Sept. '88); *Introductions In The Dark* was more electrified, sometimes pitting his hard-charging, hard-toned tenor against fuzoid synths, sometimes showing the romantic sensibility that suggests the influence of Carla Bley even before he played on two of her European tours. (Bley's bassist and collaborator Steve Swallow produces Andy's records; this summer a Bley/Swal-

low/Sheppard trio were to play some dates in Europe.)

He hit his stride with his big-band album *Soft On The Inside* (see "Reviews" July '91), where he combined players from his own band, some he first worked with in American composer George Russell's English pickup orchestra, and two musicians from the mad-cap Dutch scene whom he'd run into at an Italian festival: drummer Han Bennink and cellist Ernst Reijseger. He brought them in to add a little deliberate mayhem, an idea he picked up working with Gil Evans.

Sheppard's aware of the inspiration he draws from bandleaders Evans, Russell, and Bley, but says it's more a matter of osmosis than conscious influence. "The way I've picked up everything to do with my music is by playing next to people. Records are influential to a certain point, but really the shit happens when you're playing on stage. My tenor playing would improve dramatically after playing alongside Paul Dunmall, a fantastic English tenor saxophonist, when I'd sit in with his band or he'd sit in with mine."

Andy continues to work the big band, but he's already recorded his next album, with a "more electronic, very exciting" quintet, including synthesizer player Steve Lodder, from the big band, and a six-string electric bassist. The day we spoke, he was headed up to Woodstock, New York to mix that album with Swallow.

In England as in the States, critics like to build up musicians and then knock 'em down. But Sheppard says he hasn't tasted any negative backlash yet. "I think part of the reason is that I keep changing. By constantly serving up new things—love it or leave it—I've kept the thing happening. I've been lucky in that respect. If every record I'd made had been a continuation of that first album, I'd be on the way down now, really."

DB

EQUIPMENT

"I notice in *Down Beat* you always list what people play," Sheppard said, "but what works for you is a totally individual thing." He hastens to add he's not compulsive about trying out new stuff: "Once you get a thing which works for you, there's no point in losing sleep." Anyway, he plays Selmer Mark VI saxes. His tenor is fitted with a

Berg Larsen mouthpiece. His soprano has a metal Selmer mouthpiece. "It's an H, which is quite rare, the widest they've ever made or something—although their mouthpieces are notorious for being small." He uses "the cheapest" Rico reeds—#4 for tenor, 3½ for soprano.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as leader or co-leader

SOFT ON THE INSIDE—Antilles 422-842 927
INTRODUCTIONS IN THE DARK—Antilles 422-842 654
ANDY SHEPPARD—Antilles 422-842 710
66 SHADES OF LIPSTICK—E.G. 64/Caroline 1590 (w/ Keith Tippett)

with Carla Bley

THE VERY BIG CARLA BLEY BAND—ECM 847 942
FLEUR CARNIVORE—ECM 839 662

with Curtis Clark

LIVE AT THE BIMHUIS—Nimbus 505

with Laurent Cugny and Gil Evans

GOLDEN HAIR—EmArcy 838 773
RHYTHM-A-NING—EmArcy 836 401

with Barbara Dennerlein

HOT STUFF—Enja 79654

with George Russell

LONDON CONCERT—Label Bleu 6527/8

with Geoff Williams and Sphere

PRESENT TENSE—Cadillac 1012
SPHERE—Cadillac 1010

Key

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



Christopher Hollyday

THE NATURAL MOMENT—Novus 3118-2-N: SCORPIO RISING; HAD TO BE BRAD; ALL NEW MEANING; POINT OF DELIRIUM; EVERY TIME WE SAY GOODBYE; JOHNNY RED; AFTERGLOW; IDEISM; THE NATURAL MOMENT. (51:33)

Personnel: Hollyday, alto saxophone; Brad Mehldau, piano; John Webber, bass; Ron Savage, drums.

★★★★½

Christopher Hollyday lays some smokin' offerings at the altar of hard-bop on his third Novus/RCA release, *The Natural Moment*. He was only 20 when he recorded this disc, but the playing has the feeling of an old soul. He brings to the alto saxophone a force that's usually reserved for tenor. He has Sonny Rollins' broad, unpretentious sound and Sonny's talent for making that plain timbre seem like a choice of expression, not a lack of it. His outpouring of ideas aligns him with the hard-bop tradition. Big question is, does Hollyday manage to sound like himself and not just a clone of various jazz masters? Definitely.

True, it's hard not to think of Sonny on Walter Davis' "Scorpio Rising," where Hollyday barrels through chorus after chorus of driving solos. And the ballad "Ideism" (the '90s version of idealism?) is a first cousin to John Coltrane's "Naima," both in the structure of the head and Hollyday's gentle approach. But of the tunes on this disc, Hollyday wrote four other compositions besides "Ideism," and that ownership helps him establish his own turf. He's at his best driving a hard-edged line on his frenzied "Point Of Delirium" or trading ideas with the rest of the group on his "Had To Be Brad." Pianist Brad Mehldau swings all over the place on that tune, and drummer Ron Savage's cymbals shimmer and crash with

Elvin Jones-ish flair.

When Hollyday turns to the Cole Porter tune "Every Time We Say Goodbye," he plays as if he'd never heard the words or experienced the emotions. He doesn't quite pull off the deadpan treatment. But that's a minor drawback on a disc that's full of fresh ideas and an energy that doesn't quit. Hollyday deserves the recognition he's gotten, not the skepticism that the mantle "whiz kid" so often confers. He's a talent to keep a close eye on. (reviewed on CD)

—Elaine Guregian



Cassandra Wilson

SHE WHO WEEPS—JMT 834 443-2: ICONIC MEMORIES; CHELSEA BRIDGE; OUT LOUD (JERIS' BLUES); SHE WHO WEEPS; ANGEL; BODY AND SOUL; NEW AFRICAN BLUES. (40:40)

Personnel: Wilson, vocals; Rod Williams, piano; Jean-Paul Bourelly, guitar; Kevin Bruce Harris, Reggie Washington, Herman Fowlkes, bass; Mark Johnson, Tani Tabbal, drums.

★★★★

Rightly touted as one of the finest young jazz vocalists on the scene, Cassandra Wilson has woven her way in and out of various jazz traditions over the rambling course of her discography. It was Wilson's 1988 album *Blue Skies*, on which she applied her musky tones and supple phrasing to standards, that demonstrated Wilson's refreshing new voice within the jazz tradition. But she never gave up on the other colors making up her musical rainbow: gospel, snaky post-r&b, rap.

She Who Weeps convenes somewhere in the middle of several stylistic strands. Supported mainly by a trio led by pianist Rod Williams and without any guest spots by her Brooklynite saxophonic cronies (e.g., Steve Coleman or Greg Osby), Wilson goes after a lean sound this time around—akin to Betty Carter's proclivity for piano trio backing. In this open setting, her voice is given a good deal of free reign. She takes advantage of the space with a smart and deceptively cool improvisatory approach, descendant from Carter and Abbey Lincoln, but with an identifiable personality all its own.

Generally, the album's tone is low-key. The funk mandate is represented by her splenic, odd-metered "Out Loud (Jeris' Blues)." A slow blues trajectory guides the title tune, written by her mother Mary Fowlkes and featuring her father Herman Fowlkes on bass (and also guitarist and co-producer Jean-Paul Bourelly's serpentine blues lines). From the standard



Nicky Skopelitis/Sonny Sharrock

FAITH MOVES—CMP CD 52: WHO ARE YOU; BECOMING; MESCALITO; VENUS; IN THE FLESH; SACRIFICE; FIRST OF EQUALS; THE PYRE; UNCLE HERBIE'S DANCE. (38:25)

Personnel: Sharrock, electric guitar; Skopelitis, electric 6- & 12-string guitars, acoustic guitar, baglama, saz, coral sitar, tar, six-string bass.

★★★★½

Sonny Sharrock

ASK THE AGES—Axiom 422-848-957: PROMISES KEPT; WHO DOES SHE HOPE TO BE?; LITTLE ROCK; AS WE USED TO SING; MANY MANSIONS; ONCE UPON A TIME.

Personnel: Sharrock, electric guitar; Pharoah Sanders, tenor and soprano saxes; Elvin Jones, drums; Charnett Moffett, bass.

★★★★★

HIGHLIFE—Enemy EMY 119-2: NO MORE TEARS; ALL MY TRIALS; CHUMPY; HIGHLIFE; KATE; VENUS/UPPER EGYPT; YOUR EYES; GIANT STEPS. (44:34)

Personnel: Sharrock, electric guitar; Dave Snider, Korg M1, Korg Wave Station; Charles Baldwin, electric bass; Abe Speller, Lance Carter, drums.

★★★

Faith Moves is a fairly tame offering by Sharrock standards, focusing on the guitarist's melodic tendencies in a folk-like improvisational setting. Basically a duet project with guitarist Nicky Skopelitis, *Faith Moves* is an extension of Sharrock's 1985 solo album, *Guitar*. Here Skopelitis provides the form and structure and sets the tone of the project through his use of various Mediterranean instruments, including the Greek baglama, the Turkish saz, and the Iranian tar. Nicky also layers on coral sitar to create a shimmering effect on "First Of Equals" and "Mescalito," which features Sonny's totally

sick slide work, allowing him to explore the microtonal potential of the instrument. On "Who Are You," Nicky anchors the anthemic rock vamp with various stringed instruments and a Bootsy-styled Mu-Tron-inflected bass ostinato. "The Pyre" is an ambient drone piece à la Frippertronic, and the Pharoah Sanders composition, "Venus" (which Sony recorded with Sanders on the 1966 album, *Tauhid*), is a launching pad for another assault. In general, *Faith Moves* is about Sony reacting to the various soundscapes that Skopelitis constructs through overdubbing tracks. Since those forms are purely rock- and folk-based, Sony doesn't have too much room to move here. (reviewed on CD)

But he stretches to the heavens on *Ask The Ages*. This is Sony's dream project, teaming him with mentor Sanders, drummer Elvin Jones, and bassist Charnett Moffett. Together they rekindle a late-period Coltrane vibe (circa *Meditations*, *Live In Japan*) with collective improvisation, intense overblowing, and fervent swinging, particularly on "Promises Kept" and "Little Rock," an homage to Pharoah. Moffett sounds particularly strong here, anchoring this date with huge tones and economical, Jimmy Garrison-style bass lines. His soulful walk blends most effectively with Elvin's alluring brushwork on the melancholy ballad, "Who Does She Hope To Be?," which also highlights his solo dexterity on the upright.

Sanders and Sharrock are truly of one accord on *Ask The Ages*. All throughout his career, Sony has emulated the sound of a sax with his long, sustaining guitar lines. That quality makes for some nice blending and tight unison lines with Pharoah on "As We Used To Sing," which features Sanders on soprano. They both pull out all the stops and wail with a transcendent quality on the Coltrane-ish "Many Mansions," Pharoah again on soprano and Sony donning a bottleneck for elevated levels of sickness. Elvin, whose open-ended approach to time liberates Sony in ways that *Faith Moves* couldn't, is prominently featured on "Once Upon A Time." Sharrock not only plays with amazing energy and inspiration on *Ask The Ages*, he wrote all the tunes as well. (reviewed on cassette)

The latest Sonny Sharrock Band release, *Highlife* is his most accessible offering to date. Relying on simpler rock forms and sing-songy melodies played by a tight, competent rock band featuring two drummers, an electric bassist, and a keyboard player, this one sounds like Sonny jamming with the Allman Brothers. Some stratospheric guitar here, though the title cut and "No More Tears" are bit too upbeat and cutesy for my tastes. High-point is the urgent "Venus/Upper Egypt" and a 37-second version of "Giant Steps," which sounds like a train going through a tunnel. (reviewed on CD) —Bill Milkowski



Charlie Earland

WHIP APPEAL—Muse MCD 5409: *SONGBIRD; WHIP APPEAL; BURNER'S DESIRE; NO BRAIN, NO PAIN; EIGHT AFTER TEN; MORE TODAY THAN YESTERDAY.* (41:46)

Personnel: Earland, organ; Johnny Coles, flugelhorn; Jeffrey Newell, soprano and alto saxes; Houston Person, tenor sax; Robert Block, guitar; Marvin Jones, drums; Lawrence Killian, congas, percussion.

★ ★ ★ 1/2

Jimmy Smith

FOURMOST—Milestone MCD-9184-2: *MIDNIGHT SPECIAL; MAIN STEM; SUMMERTIME; THINGS AIN'T WHAT THEY USED TO BE; SOULFUL BROTHERS; MY FUNNY VALENTINE; QUIET NIGHTS OF QUIET STARS.* (55:46)

Personnel: Smith, organ; Stanley Turrentine, tenor sax; Kenny Burrell, guitar; Grady Tate, drums, vocal (cut 6).

★ ★ ★

Jimmy Ponder

COME ON DOWN—Muse MCD 5375: *UNCLE STEVE; EBB TIDE; SECRET LOVE; BARBARA; COME ON DOWN; A SUBTLE ONE; A TRIBUTE TO A ROSE; FATS.* (44:39)

Personnel: Ponder, guitar; Houston Person, tenor sax; Lonnie Smith, organ; Winard Harper, drums; Sammy Figueroa, congas, percussion.

★ ★ ★ ★

Lou Donaldson

PLAY THE RIGHT THING—Milestone MCD-9190-2: *PLAY THE RIGHT THING; WHISKEY DRINKIN' WOMAN; MARMADUKE; HARLEM NOCTURNE; THIS IS HAPPINESS; I HAD THE CRAZIEST DREAM; THE MASQUERADE IS OVER; FOOT PATTIN' TIME.* (49:53)

Personnel: Donaldson, alto sax, vocal (2); Lonnie Smith, organ; Peter Bernstein, guitar; Bernard Purdie, drums; Ralph Dorsey, conga.

★ ★ 1/2

The organ-jazz revival grinds on, resurrecting careers gone moribund in the synth-crazed '70s and '80s. The music is little-changed from its '60s heyday except for a new-found purism, an inauthentic stance for a style that, from the jump, chased every passing commercial fad. Then again, you might say that hard-bop purism is today's passing commercial fad.

Jimmy Smith's *Foursome* is not just the all-star date its name implies but a reunion for Smith, Turrentine, and Burrell, who played on the classic 1960 session that produced "Midnight Special." Recorded live at Fat Tuesday's in New York, it features burnished performances by master craftsmen who don't seem to be trying. But that's always been the idea, and here they're less laid-back than in the old days. Showier and more sophisticated, they've lost

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the laconic edge that made the original "Midnight Special"—longer, slower, and bluesier—so riveting.

Guitarist Jimmy Ponder is practically a Hammond accessory; on *Come On Down* he's accompanied by organist Lonnie Smith, often confused with electric pianist Lonnie Liston Smith. Ponder's luminous, liquid tone and smooth, hornlike phrasing have ripened with age, and Smith's style has matured from psychedelic funk to crafty, hot-blooded blues-bop. Tenorist Houston Person, known mainly as singer Etta Jones' partner, has likewise developed into a formidable improviser, side-stepping clichés while caressing ballads and scorching the blues. The band simmers tastily over crackling rhythms, cooking up its own quiet storm.

Alto vet Lou Donaldson also features Lonnie Smith on his *Play The Right Thing*, but the organist is more subdued on this tepid set. Donaldson's reputation rests more on his early association with bop-era greats (including Jimmy Smith) than on his stolid, workman-like playing. He's got soul and chops, but little fire or imagination: compare his wooden reading of "Harlem Nocturne," for example, to Ponder's vibrant take on "Ebb Tide." Guitarist Peter Bernstein shows promise, but can't yet hold a candle to Ponder or Burrell.

Organist Charles Earland, who's worked with both Donaldson and Ponder, is joined by Person and Johnny Coles on *Whip Appeal*, but members of his Windy City working band, notably guitarist Robert Block and Grover-ish saxophonist Jeffrey Newell, carry most of the

Sax 4 Moderns
by Elaine Guregian

Pop or jazz? To varying degrees, four saxophonists avoid choosing sides on their new discs. With *Keep This Love Alive* (GRP GRD-9646; 47:19; ★★★★★), Tom Scott once again confounds the dividing line between genres. And as usual, Scott has surrounded himself with talent, this time highlighting a lineup of singers that includes Diane Schuur, Bill Champlin, and Brenda Russell. The idea of showcasing singers was clever, though Scott went overboard on variety when he chose the tunes for this recording. "Reason For The Rain," "Only A Heartbeat Away," and "Keep This Love Alive" are polished ballads, and on "Whenever You Dream Of Me" Scott's solid cushion of sound shows off Schuur's light, clear vocals. But the disco beat of "Givin' Our Best" is out of place here, and it's a jarring leap from the bump & grind of the funky "Miz Thang" to the big-band sweetness of "Whenever You Dream Of Me." These tunes work better individually than together. Guitarists Dean Parks and Eric Gale get in some great licks, while Scott comes across like a powerhouse one-man band, playing all of the saxophones and synth strings.

Listening to the voices that tease the listener like overheated cheerleaders ("S-A-X, Saxuality") on the title track of *Saxuality* (Arista ARCD-8674; 53:02; ★★★★★), you might think Candy Dulfer had been hanging around with Prince. And you'd be right. This Amsterdam-born player has backed him, along with Van Morrison and Dave A. Stewart of the Eurhythmics. This album veers between a Weather Report-ish electric jazz approach ("Jazzid") and more soulful shadings (the vocal "Heavenly City"). But the heart of Dulfer's approach is funk, as on a cover of Miles Davis' "So What" that forsakes the tune's cool beginnings and turns it into a steamy strut. Likewise, the line "It doesn't matter where you get the funk, just be sure that the funk gets you," from the tune "Get The



Funk," shows Dulfer's orientation. *Saxuality* is pop with grit, and Dulfer's witty confidence makes this a promising debut.

Warren Hill also markets the saxophone's seductive powers, but he packs his material in a sleeker package on *Kiss Under The Moon* (Novus 3117-2-N; 52:29; ★★). Anyone remember Gato Barbieri's *Caliente*? Hill's growls remind me of that album, which at first sounded hot but seemed tamer with each hearing. Hill's passion comes across as calculated. Craig Thomas' vocal on the danceable "One Touch" puts a more individual stamp on this disc, but for the most part the character is generic. Hill's silky sound and the heavily synthesized tunes are produced to the max.

One of the weaknesses of Hill's album is that the cast of players changes so often you never get a sense of a group identity. Pittsburgher Kenny Blake, on the other hand, has several long-time associates with him on *Interior Design* (Heads Up OXCD 3011; 48:07; ★★½). Just listen to "Harlem Nocturne," where Steve Trettle's drums and Keith Stebler's piano support Blake's relaxed lines to set a Latin mood. That's the sound of players working off each other. Blake's group checks out the territory from Steely Dan's "Babylon Sisters" to Paul Desmond's "Take Five," which they recast in a gentle Latin style. A predominantly acoustic sound helps this group sound more like jazzers than pop musicians, though it would be nice to hear them go more confidently in that direction instead of hedging their bets. Maybe next time. (all reviewed on CD)

DB

weight. Refusing to bury himself in the past, Earland, one of the more progressive B3 stylists of the '70s, opens with Kenny G's lame but idiomatically appropriate "Songbird." From there he builds hurtling momentum with pulsating pedal work, lightning keyboard runs, and piercing long tones, buoying the soloists through challenging material that twists, turns, and soars. (reviewed on CD)

—Larry Birnbaum



Ran Blake

THAT CERTAIN FEELING—hat ART CD 6077: *Ouverture I; Mine; It Ain't Necessarily So; The Man I Love; Oh Where's My Bess I; Blues; Strike Up The Band; What Do You Want Wid Bess; I Got Rhythm; That Certain Feeling I; Ouverture II; Someone To Watch Over Me; But Not For Me; Who Cares; Liza; Clar Clara; Oh Where's My Bess II; 'S Wonderful; That Certain Feeling II.* (66:28)

Personnel: Blake, piano; Ricky Ford, tenor saxophone (cuts 2,7,9,12,16,18); Steve Lacy, soprano saxophone (4,7,12,14,18).

★★★★

Ran Blake/ Jeanne Lee

YOU STEPPED OUT OF A CLOUD—Owl R2 79238: *You Stepped Out Of A Dream; News-Watch; Where Are You?; The Wind; Worry Now Later; Misterioso "Rose"; You Go To My Head; I Like Your Style; Kristallnacht; Vanguard; Last Days/Hands; Corcovado; Alone Together; Journal D'une Folle.* (57:48)

Personnel: Lee, voice; Blake, piano.

★★★★

Ran Blake's is a touch-sensitive art. You'd be hard-pressed to name another pianist who lets the success or failure of his music ride on dynamics the way Blake does. Having forsworn virtuosity as an end in itself, Blake plumbs the dark recesses and the hot spots of his material, repeatedly distilling it to a chord, an arpeggio, a note, that speaks volumes. On *You Stepped Out Of A Cloud* and *That Certain Feeling*, Blake crafts insidiously intoxicating programs with low-keyed deliberation, note by note, whether caressed or struck, dampened or sustained.

For all its scholarly ramifications, the objective of Blake's approach is a palpable intimacy between musicians, and between musicians and listeners. His rapport with Jeanne Lee, deliciously dubbed "Lady Dusk" by annotator Alain Gerber, is inspired; the same can be said of his work with Ricky Ford and Steve Lacy. Even when Blake sits out—as on "Someone To

Watch Over Me," a smouldering duet by the two saxophonists, and Lee's four graceful unaccompanied solos, especially "Vanguard," Blake's wistful signature piece—he is a lingering presence.

That Certain Feeling has a much more ample portion of solo piano; it's in these solos that Blake's third-stream slant on Gershwin holds up best. Also, the close mic'ing employed on this studio date captures the crucial nuances of his technique better than the heavily hall-sweetened sound of *You Stepped Out Of A*

Cloud. But, understanding Blake the collaborator, the counterpart, the confidant, is perhaps more critical to fully appreciating his artistry. In this regard, both recordings are exemplary, even though *That Certain Feeling* offers only three duets with Ford, two with Lacy, and two trios—including a simmering "Strike Up The Band." With an LP's worth of duets, *You Stepped Out Of A Cloud* is a richly detailed portrait of an unique musical partnership entering its fourth decade. (reviewed on CD)

—Bill Shoemaker

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Pianist **McCoy Tyner** pays tribute to his former leader John Coltrane on this beautifully rendered title featuring classic interpretations of Coltrane originals and the talents of Avery Sharpe and Aaron Scott. [Enja 79668]

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Itchy Fingers tread where few jazz groups dare. These four saxophonists delve into the creative world of "Chamber Jazz," at times simulating a brass section and combining the intricacies of a classical chamber orchestra with the spontaneity of a modern jazz ensemble. [Enja 79666]

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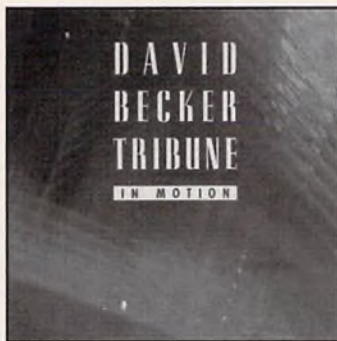
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Cecil Taylor

JAZZ ADVANCE—Blue Note CDP 7 84462 2: *BEMSHA SWING; CHARGE 'EM BLUES; AZURE; SONG; YOU'D BE SO NICE TO COME HOME TO; RICK KICK SHAW; SWEET AND LOVELY.* (53:25)

Personnel: Taylor, piano; Steve Lacy, soprano saxophone (cuts 2,4); Buell Neidlinger, bass (1-4,6,7); Dennis Charles, drums (1-4,6,7).

★ ★ ★ ½

John Coltrane

COLTRANE TIME—Blue Note CDP 7 84461 2: *SHIFTING DOWN; JUST FRIENDS; LIKE SOMEONE IN LOVE; DOUBLE CLUTCHING.* (33:40)

Personnel: Coltrane, tenor saxophone; Kenny Dorham, trumpet; Cecil Taylor, piano; Chuck Israels, bass; Louis Hayes, drums.

★ ★ ★

Listening to these discs side by side, it's pretty obvious that, for Cecil Taylor, the date with John Coltrane was a strange affair. Strange in that Taylor's playing on *Jazz Advance*—his debut recording, from 1956—sounds more "advanced" compared to both Taylor's as well as Trane's still-developing but still modal/bop playing on *Coltrane Time* two years later. Originally titled *Hard Driving Jazz* under Taylor's name, then *Stereo Drive*, and finally *Coltrane Time*, it nonetheless makes for fascinating listening, similar to Trane's more sympathetic collaboration with Don Cherry on the 1960 *The Avant-Garde* date.

On *Jazz Advance*, originally issued on the Transition label, Taylor gives Monk's "Bemsha Swing" a spiritual overhaul, taking Monk's music to the next level: playing the melody, Taylor proceeds to deconstruct then reconstruct, using Monk's asymmetrical and off-beat musical logic as a launching pad. And, as with everything else on *Jazz Advance* (sans Taylor's solo flight on Cole Porter's "You'd Be So Nice To Come Home To"), "Bemsha" swings. (The Porter treatment presages things to come, including the relative burying of melody beneath non-swinging, percussive-oriented interpretation.)

Taylor was still playing in a manner that suggested Garner, Brubeck, and Monkian influences, with heavy chord clusters and a tendency to derange and derail melodies. In Taylor's case, however, elements of the macabre, absurd, cosmic, and just plain fun transformed the music of Ellington, Monk, and Porter into something altogether new, playing the spirit of jazz to the hilt. His three originals, by the way, stand up nicely next to Duke's "Azure," for example, reminding us that with Taylor, it's as much in the execution (spontaneous composition) as it is in the writing.

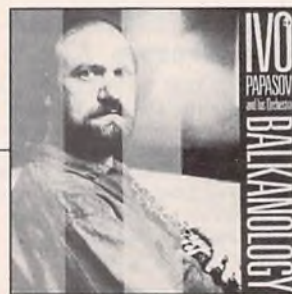
Steve Lacy, on two cuts, plays it cool and

angular along with steady groove merchants Buell Neidlinger and Dennis Charles on six. A delightful dynamic, Taylor's comparatively "straight" comrades, however, leave one to ponder if this was a necessary anchor for Cecil's then-flights of fancy.

More conventional playing drives *Coltrane Time*, with Cecil's darting chords and single-note stabs providing the most interesting playing overall. Even more odd than the Trane/Taylor pairing is the addition of trumpet great Kenny Dorham in an inspired, lyrical but by-the-book appearance. Hayes and Israel, albeit steady and sure, are also less than adventurous here (in a manner similar to Neidlinger and Charles). Still, it's the sound of a boxed-in Taylor behind Trane's tempered sheets of sound that stirs, if, ultimately, disappoints. Instead of what sounds like an impromptu jam session, with no alternates or additional tracks to beef up this skimpy set, what if there'd been more of a "meeting of the spirits"? Perhaps there was, and this is it: Dorham's 12-bar blues, "Shifting Down," sounds more like the music to a late-night '50s cop show, with the focus directed to visuals; much of Trane's playing appears tentative, particularly on "Just Friends."

As for sound quality, *Jazz Advance* has been cleaned up. Poorly recorded to begin with, Blue Note's Michael Cuscuna managed to "correct" the sonic waverings of earlier editions. With *Coltrane Time*, it's odd that one of its original titles was *Stereo Drive*: the original mix was in mono, redone later to simulate stereo. But hey, the format, as well as some of the music, was new. (reviewed on CD)

—John Ephland



Ivo Papasov
And His
Orchestra

BALKANOLOGY—Hannibal HNCD 1363: *MLA-DESHKI DANCE; HRISTIANOVA KOPANITSA; ISTORIA NA EDNA LYUBOV (LOVE STORY); IVO'S RUCHENITSA; SONG FOR BABA NEDELYA; ERGENSKI DANCE; MOMINSKO HORO; TZIGANSKA BALLADA; VESEL (ZBORN) (MARRIAGE SONG); PROLETEN DANCE; KASAPSKO HORO.* (55:17)

Personnel: Papasov, clarinet; Neshko Neshev, accordion; Radi Kazakov, bass; Andrei Kamzamalov, guitar; Youri Younakov, saxophone; Stefan Angelov, drums; Maria Karafezieva, vocals (cuts 3, 5, 9).

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

How to describe Ivo Papasov's mad clarinet playing and his incredible Bulgarian wedding band? How about spontaneous combustion! Once again, Papasov has his band as well as

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Born and raised in New England, Eddie Higgins started his professional career in Chicago, while studying at the Northwestern University Music School.

For twenty years Eddie worked at some of Chicago's best known jazz clubs. His longest and most memorable job was at the London House where he led the house trio for twelve years, playing opposite the biggest jazz stars of the 50's and 60's like Stan Getz, Oscar Peterson, Dizzy Gillespie, Errol Garner, George Shearing, Cannonball Adderley and Bill Evans.

During the same period, Eddie recorded many albums under his own name, and many more as a sideman with a wide variety of musicians, ranging in style from Coleman Hawkins to Wayne Shorter, Don Goldie to Freddie Hubbard, Jack Teagarden to Al Grey.

In the 1980's Eddie has traveled widely on the jazz festival circuit and has performed frequently in Europe and Japan.

Eddie has now started the 90's leading a trio that features guitarist Kevin Eubanks and bassist Rufus Reid in a recording that blends the musicianship of three generations of great jazzmen in a program of original compositions and standards by Gershwin, Monk, Powell and Jobim.



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the listener holding onto the tail of a tiger in this incendiary romp through a variety of eastern European traditional dance styles given a radiant contemporary facelift. In the album's liner notes, saxophonist Yuri Younakov explains why the Orchestra never looks at the audience: "There's no time. Have you ever seen how a hunted wild rabbit runs? It . . . zigzag[s], stops, returns, does 8's and 16's. . . . That's how Ivo plays. And we chase him like hounds with our tongues hanging out." That's the perfect image for Papasov's music, which is at turns crazed, haunting, dazzling, and quick-witted.

Hefty Ivo Papasov (legend has it that his umbilical cord was tied with a thread from his father's *zurna*) unleashes the whirlwind of asymmetric rhythms, exotic time signatures, accelerating tempos, and staccato melody lines that have made him a living legend in his Bulgarian homeland. He leads the way on his clarinet, blasting out torrents of 16th notes, spitting and waiting at dizzying velocities, disguising his clarinet's lone to make it sound like an oboe or bagpipes, speeding improvisational solos into towering helixes, and challenging his bandmates to engage in buoyant duets (listen to the clarinet and sax explosively intertwine on the first cut, then catch the amazing accordion-clarinet harmonies on the next).

The sheer power and beauty of the music overrides any concern with virtuosic excesses.

Instead of Papasov and crew's rapid deliveries being boastful displays of instrumental mastery, they pack a wake-up punch full of ecstasy and joy. In addition, Ivo's wife Maria contributes fascinating vibrato vocals on the delicate ballad "Istoria Na Edna Lyubov," the only respite in the entire collection from the breathtakingly beautiful, breathlessly fast dance frenzy. (reviewed on CD)
—Dan Ouellette



David Sanborn

ANOTHER HAND—Elektra Musician 61088-2: *FIRST SONG*; *MONICA JANE*; *COME TO ME*; *NINA*; *HOBBIES*; *ANOTHER HAND*; *JESUS*; *WEIRD FROM ONE STEP BEYOND*; *CEE*; *MEDLEY: PRAYERS FOR CHARLIE FROM THE DEVIL AT FOUR O'CLOCK & THE LONELY FROM THE TWILIGHT ZONE*; *DUKES & COUNTS*. (58:21)

Personnel: Sanborn, alto sax; Bill Frisell (cuts 1,2,6,7,9), Marc Ribot (3,6-9), Al Anderson (4), Dave Tronzo (6-8), guitar; Terry Adams (3,4,7,8), Mulgrew Miller (5,10), piano; Leon Pendarvis, organ (2); Charlie Haden (1,2,6,9), Greg Cohen (3,4,7-9), Marcus Miller (5,10), bass; Joey Baron (1-3,6-9), Steve Jordan (4), Jack DeJohnette (5,10), drums; Don Alias, percussion (2-4,6-9); Lenny Pickett, tenor sax (2), contra and E-flat clarinets (9); Art Baron, trombone (2,9); Syd Straw, vocals (4,6).

★ ★ ★ 1/2

For years, David Sanborn's suffered detractors dismissing his Grammy-filled "jazz" career as nothing more than one long, sybaritic soak in the tepid bath water of pop music. Let's remember, alas, this Butterfield Blues Band alumnus had the jazz designation foisted upon him; his head and heart have always belonged to r&b. To his credit, Sanborn has worked his best-selling formulae out on a dozen feature albums with an open, honest ear to creative possibilities.

This alto populist's latest is primarily a creditable stab at the not-so-safe and unbleached real stuff, jazz sans commercial alloys. Take the title track, wherein his instrument perkily yet reflectively moves short phrases around chords, as heavyweights Jack DeJohnette and Mulgrew Miller refuse to condescend to any of his less imaginative, secondhand improvisatory ideas. On an evocative program selected in part by producer Hal Willner, Sanborn has fair success investigating the softer ranges of the alto, conveying the haunting anticipation of sadness and puzzlement. Bill Frisell's on hand for five late-night contemplations, most impressively adding electro-eclectic beauty to a serious reading of session bassist Charlie Haden's "First Song" and contributing a gentle-smile

GO JAZZ

"Go Jazz, simply put, is the most basic verb followed by the juiciest noun."

—Ben Sidran

BEN SIDRAN
Cool Paradise
Multi-talented composer/vocalist/keyboardist Ben Sidran takes us to "Cool Paradise" with this endearing collection of jazz vocal originals featuring Billy Peterson, Gordy Knutson, Bob Malach & Ricky Peterson. (BM/Go Jazz 79350)

BOB MALACH
Mood Swing
One of contemporary jazz' brightest up-and-coming saxophonists, Bob Malach smokes on this collection of upbeat originals supported by an all-star group including Dr. John, Steve Gadd, Vinnie Colaiuta, Eddie Gomez, Will Lee, Russ Ferrante, Robben Ford and Bob Mintzer. (BM/Go Jazz 79351)

BLUEMOON/GO JAZZ
S E R I E S

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acoustic feel to the strange, subtle delights of the Velvet Underground's "Jesus." Only the medley of music from a *Twilight Zone* episode and a lesser Spencer Tracy movie seems static, self-consciously *misterioso*.

The brie-and-Birkenstocks crowd, mainstream USA, and skeptics who choose but bold jazz—strange bedfellows—should all give *Another Hand* a try. (reviewed on CD)

—Frank-John Hadley



Saffire—Uppity Blues Women

HOT FLASH—Alligator 4796: *Two In The Bush Is Better Than One In The Hand*; *Sloppy Drunk*; *One Good Man*; *Dirty Sheets*; *Tom Cat Blues*; *Learn To Settle For Less*; *You'll Never Get Me Out Of Your Mind*; *(Mr. Insurance Man) Take Out That Thing*; *Hopin' It'll Be Alright*; *A Little Bit Of Your Loving Goes A Very Long Way*; *Shopping For Love*; *Elevator Man*; *Torch Song #1* (Torch Song #2: *Why Don't You Do Right?*); *Prove Me Wrong*; *(No Need) Pissin' On A Skunk*. (54:18)

Personnel: Ann Rabson, vocals, piano, guitar, and kazoo; Gaye Adegbalola, vocals, guitar; Earlene Lewis, vocals and bass; Billy Branch, harmonica (cuts 1,4,10).

★★★★

Saffire, those Uppity Blues Women, are back with their sharp tongues, middle-age wisdom, and wicked blues licks. Their latest, *Hot Flash*, is a butt-kickin', foot-stompin' follow-up to their self-titled first album on Alligator Records. Lyrically, *Hot Flash* offers some of the best head-shaking chuckles of the year. This trio of middle-aged-and-proud women draw upon everything from the domestic to the sexual (not to mention the evil realization of aging) as rhyme fodder. Titles like "Two In The Bush Is Better Than One In The Hand," "Sloppy Drunk," "(No Need) Pissin' On A Skunk," and "(Mr. Insurance Man) Take Out That Thing" offer an idea of what they're all about. Rest assured, the lyrics are equal to, or even better than, the titles.

But what pushes Saffire from novelty to truly nifty is the group's no-bull, barroom acoustic sound. Ann Rabson's bluesy, honky-tonk piano is the engine that makes the group swing, while Gaye Adegbalola and Earlene Lewis keep it simple and tight on guitar and upright bass, respectively. Toss in an occasional kazoo lick, of all things, as well as a little help from Billy Branch on harmonica and you've got one of the best blues albums I've heard this year.

Let those toes commence a-tappin'. (reviewed on CD)

—Frank Alkyer

Are You Ready?

A four-CD box spanning 30 years, *Star Time* (Polydor SACD 331; 71:40/74:36/72:57/75:34: ★★★★★) provides a fascinating overview of **James Brown's** spectacular career from deep-soul r&b balladeer in the '50s to his evolution as father of funk in the '60s to disco wannabe in the '70s. Sampling sustained the memory (if not the bank account) of J.B. in the '80s. His signature screams and funky grooves are heard on countless rap albums of the decade. Now in the '90s, he's back. To commemorate his recent release from jail, Polydor has



CHARLES STEWART

James Brown: screams and funky grooves

released this ambitious package complete with lengthy liner notes and cut-by-cut musician credits.

Disc I, covering the mid-'50s through mid-'60s, reflects the influence of such popular r&b acts as Hank Ballard & the Midnighters, the Five Royales, and Bill Doggett. Horns and upright bass set the tone of early cuts like 1956's "Please Please Please" and 1958's "Tell Me What I Did Wrong" (with some cool Mickey Baker-ish guitar licks courtesy of Kenny Burrell). The final two tracks on this disc, 1964's "I Got You" and 1965's "Papa's Got A Brand New Bag," point to a new direction in James' *modus operandi*, sparked by the presence of electric bassist Bernard Odum and rhythm guitar great Jimmy Nolen.

This funky formula carries through on Disc II with classic J.B. hits like "Bring It Up," "Cold Sweat," and "Lickin' Stick." By this time, James added a second guitarist to the lineup to help create the polyrhythmic guitar textures that Sunny Ade and other juju artists later picked up on. Disc III features the driving funk rhythm section of bassist Bootsy Collins and drummer John "Jabo" Starks fueling good-foot grooves like "Super Bad" and "Soul Power." Disc IV veers into disco territory with "Body Heat" and "Too Funky In Here" and culminates with "Unity," J.B.'s 1984 collaboration with hip-hop pioneer Afrika Bambaataa.

A treasure trove of funk from Soul Brother #1. (reviewed on CD)

—Bill Milkowski

hat — expect the unexpected



Poet Robert Creeley once suggested, in a brief note on the remarkable fiction writer Fielding Dawson, that what was necessary to bring a short story to life - or, perhaps deeper still, to cause such a union of writer and material as would truer reflect how the story, and the act of writing it, is life - was improvisation. "If one write only what one intends, as some presumption always to be respected, then intentions are really all one ever comes to - good or bad. There must be a further place where all assumptions of significance are lost, and some much more present instant of integrity can occur." This strikingly phrased "instant of integrity" is the act of improvisation, ever bound to an eternal present. There is no past or future when putting form to the imagination. And yet implicit in improvisation is a sense of responsibility, based on control, so long as it is understood that... "Control here means the recognition of a moment to moment term of possibility, which is not static, but rather so volatile in its nature it demands all possible articulation of attention - to give shape to smoke in air."

Songs - with or without lyrics - being no less than stories, and the best songs of George (and frequently Ira) Gershwin being stories of the first order, any number of these exhilarating moments are to be heard on this disc, a result of the material (Gershwin's) inspiring the imagination of the improviser, Ran Blake. Blake's art is wholly a product of his attention (to the stories, images, and utterances of his imagination) and integrity (in the formal process of making music, spontaneously). Even with songs as familiar as Gershwin's, so ingrained in our hearts and our history, we can be surprised by the possibilities of expression which Blake (and Ricky Ford, and Steve Lacy) offers us precisely because of his rejection of the familiar, the literal, the expected, the commonly intended. So stark, evocative, and eloquent is his music that it does sometimes seem that what he is doing is giving shape to smoke in the air.

Why, specifically, Gershwin? Blake sees this effort as part of an ongoing series of American Composer recordings.

Ran Blake plays Gershwin because these songs are meaningful and inspiring to him. Those stories he shares, or suggests, to us, are no less real because they are improvised. They live, and breathe, and breed, if we listen.

— Art Lange
November 1990

hat ART: A WORK IN PROGRESS

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Tough Young Tenors

ALONE TOGETHER—Antilles 422-848 767-2:
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HEAD; STEVIE; THE BREAK THROUGH; ALONE TO-
GETHER; ASK ME NOW; BLUES ON THE CORNER;
CHELSEA BRIDGE; CALVARY; THE ETERNAL TRIAN-
GLE.* (64:52)

Personnel: Walter Blanding, Jr. (cuts 1,7,8,11),
James Carter (1,6,9,11), Todd Williams (2,4,8,11),
Herb Harris (3,6,10,11), Tim Warfield, Jr.
(4,5,10,11), tenor saxophone; Marcus Roberts,
piano; Reginald Veal, bass; Ben Riley, drums.

★ ★ ★

James Clay

I LET A SONG GO OUT OF MY HEART—
Antilles 422-848 279-2: *THINGS AIN'T WHAT THEY
USED TO BE; MY FOOLISH HEART; RAIN CHECK; THE
VERY THOUGHT OF YOU; I MEAN YOU; I LET A SONG
GO OUT OF MY HEART; JUST IN TIME; I CAN'T GET
STARTED; JOHN PAUL JONES A.K.A. TRANE'S BLUES;
BODY AND SOUL.* (68:00)

Personnel: Clay, tenor saxophone; Cedar Wal-
ton, piano; David Williams, bass; Billy Higgins,
drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

High noon in an imaginary jazz Western. A gang of brash tenderhorns—Tough Young Tenors—come to town itchin' to raise Cain and make a name for themselves. James Clay, a semi-legendary 55-year-old Lone Star State player, something like graybeard lawman Joel McCrea in *Ride The High Country*, straps on his horn one more time. Saxes blaze bop phrases. The smoke clears. Only Clay's still standing.

On his first album in ages, the former Ray Charles sideman and '50s L.A. sidekick of Ornette Coleman packs plenty of Texas tenor soulfulness, meaning his pungent, straight-shooting mix of joy, hard luck, and urgent or whispered sensuality tells the same truths as Fathead Newman, Illinois Jacquet, Arnett Cobb, Ornette, and others past and present. The 10 jazz standards essayed here by Clay and mainstream brethren Cedar Walton, Billy Higgins, and David Williams are imbued with a timeless spirit and tremendous respect for melody and harmony. No harrowing 70-m.p.h. plunges on a steep roller coaster to be had, just a steady and most agreeable hour-plus musical ride.

At their debut session, the five Tough Young Tenors, all well under 30, show great promise digesting their various influences while taking the long road to singularity and refinement. Backed by ever-deeper-in-the-shed marvel Marcus Roberts, grown-up drums-and-cym-

bals artiste Ben Riley, and unobtrusive bassist Reginald Veal, each yearling gets to latch onto these pearls (all five cook on Sonny Stitt's "The Eternal Triangle") and try to conjure singing, intelligent statements that look beyond Messrs. Coltrane, Stitt, Rollins, Rouse. . . .

Well, it's a dark night's stroll in an English hedge maze determining which of these technically sure-footed young men hears the call of intimacy the clearest. Methinks Wynton's friend Todd Williams and James Carter, a member of Julius Hemphill's group, get the nod. The first has a fairly hefty tone and is more exciting than frisky, while the latter does himself proud interpreting Billy Strayhorn's "Chelsea Bridge."

Yes, Clay can handle these five, but some years hence *they'll* have the personality to

flatten their own challengers. (reviewed on CD)

—Frank-John Hudley



Son Seals

LIVING IN THE DANGER ZONE—Alligator ALCD 4798: *FRIGIDAIRE WOMAN; I CAN'T LOSE THE BLUES; WOMAN IN BLACK; TELL IT TO ANOTHER FOOL; AIN'T THAT SOME SHAME; ARKANSAS WOMAN; DANGER ZONE; LAST FOUR NICKELS; MY TIME NOW; BAD AXE; MY LIFE.* (52:02)

Personnel: Seals, guitar, vocals; Red Groetzinger, tenor saxophone, flute (cuts 1,5,7,8); Kevin Tremblay, guitar (1,5,7,8); Sid Wingfield, organ, piano (2-4,6,9-11); Ray Williams (1,5,7,8), Johnny B. Gayden (2-4,6,9-11), bass; Kerman Frazier (1,5,7,8), Ray "Killer" Allison (2-4,6,9,10), drums; Sugar Blue, harmonica (11).

★ ★ ★ ★

Son Seals split with Alligator after his fifth LP for the label in 1984, and except for one self-produced, badly distributed cassette, he

THREE BRILLIANT SHADES OF THE BLUES.

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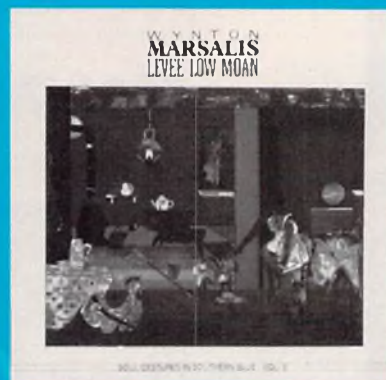
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Saxophonist **Michael Zilber**, with his strong sense of composition and sublime lyricism, presents his auspicious debut as a leader with help from Gil Goldstein, Harvie Swartz and Danny Gottlieb. (Owl 79237)



BRAD BUELHE
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Clean, sparse melodies and classic jazz combinations emphasize the Owl recording debut of guitarist **Brad Buelhe**. Also featuring **Danny Hayes**, **Kip Reed**, **Joe Lovano** and **Mike Clark**. (Owl 79239)



ED SARATH
Voice Of The Wind

A wonderful range of moods and a bigger-than-life symphonic sound characterize the music of **Ed Sarath**. Excellent support from labelmate **Dave Liebman**, **Joanne Brackeen**, **Cecil McBee** and **Billy Hart**. (Owl 79240)



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hasn't made another album till now. Meanwhile, a host of new bluesmen, mostly young and white, have come out with ersatz variations on the high-octane modern Chicago sound **Seals** helped pioneer. But the Arkansas-bred singer/guitarist never stopped gigging, and *Living In The Danger Zone*, once more on Alligator, finds him still ahead of the pack, his razor-edge licks as keen as ever.

Seals expands his Albert King-rooted style on r&b tunes like "Tell It To Another Fool" and "Danger Zone," breaking the 12-bar monotony with suave, funky progressions. But his raspy baritone is too gruff for soul crooning, as he proves on the maudlin "My Life." No-frills, down-and-dirty guitar is still his forte, grinding deeper now that he's brought his youthful wildness under control. There's a horn section on several tracks, but **Seals** gets more effective backing from an organ trio, with drummer Ray "Killer" Allison almost upstaging the leader. (reviewed on CD)
—Larry Birnbaum



Bonnie Raitt

LUCK OF THE DRAW—Capitol C2-96111: *SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT; GOOD MAN, GOOD WOMAN; CAN'T MAKE YOU LOVE ME; TANGLED AND DARK; COME TO ME; NO BUSINESS; ONE PART BE MY LOVER; NOT THE ONLY ONE; PAPA COME QUICK (JODY AND CHICO); SLOW RIDE; LUCK OF THE DRAW; ALL AT ONCE.* (53:47)

Personnel: Raitt, vocals, slide, acoustic and electric guitars, electric piano; James "Hutch" Hutchinson, bass (cuts 1-6, 8, 10, 11); Don Was, jug bass (9); Ricky Fataar (1, 4-6, 8-10), Curt Bisquera (1, 2), Tony Braunagel (3), Jeff Porcaro (11), drums; Stephen Bruton (1), Randy Jacobs (2, 4), Johnny Lee Schell (5), John Hiatt (6), Richard Thompson (8, 11), Mark Goldenberg (8, 11), Billy Vera (9), Robben Ford (10), guitars; Scott Thurston, guitars (10, 11), keyboards (1, 11); Ivan Neville, Hammond B3 (2), keyboards (4); Benmont Tench, Hammond C3 (3, 7, 8, 11), piano (8); Ian McLagan, Hammond B3 (5); Bruce Hornsby, piano, keyboards (3); Steve Conn, accordion (9); Debra Dobkin (1, 2, 4-6, 8, 10), Paulinho Da Costa (3, 7, 11), percussion; Delbert McClinton, vocals and harmonica (2); Lee Thornberg, Greg Adams, trumpet (4); Stephen Kupka, baritone sax (4); Emilio Castillo, Steve Grove, tenor sax (4); Phil Cunningham, pennywhistle (7); Aaron Shaw, Great Highland pipes (12); Novi, Carole Castillo, Pamela Goldsmith, Rick Gelding, viola (12); Dennis Karmazyn, Larry Corbett, Ernie Ehrhardt, cello (12); Sweet Pea Atkinson, Sir Harry Bowers, David Lasley, Arnold McCuller, Kris Kristofferson, Paul Brady, Danny Timms, Glen Clark, backing vocals.

★ ★ ★ ★

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Of Time album, Bonnie Raitt is following it up with another impressive collection. What she does best—slide out gutsy and soulful shades of the blues, vulnerably dip into heartfelt ballads, and crack down blistering rockers—Bonnie Raitt superbly delivers once again here on *Luck Of The Draw*. But that's no surprise. Just as she never unloads a mediocre live show, she rarely disappoints in her studio endeavors.

While Raitt is a tad more reflective on this album than her earlier, rowdier LPs, *Luck Of The Draw* is merely a variation on the theme of the styles of music she has consistently re-

corded over her amazing but rocky 20-year career. The name of the game is substitute excellence with excellence. There are no songs by Jerry Williams or Eric Kaz, who have penned several Raitt classics. But, hey, there's Paul Brady, who not only wrote the sober title tune but also contributed the gentle "Not The Only One" that receives an exhilarating background vocal arrangement. There's no John Prine tune (e.g., the perfect "Angel From Montgomery"), but there is the spunky John Hiatt number, "No Business." No blues mama Sippie Wallace numbers, but Raitt makes up for that with her own assertive tunes like "Come To

Me."

Longtime bandmate/guitarist Johnny Lee Schell only shows up on one cut, but the ubiquitous guitarist/singer/composer Richard Thompson sits in on a couple numbers. No hooking up with John Lee Hooker this time out, but her duet with Delbert McCClinton, the King of the White Texas Bluesmen, on "Good Man, Good Woman" is a killer. Plus, the bonuses are a down-home country blues song written by Billy Vera and a funkified r&b tune that features a sweet, muted trumpet solo by Tower of Power horn man Lee Thornberg. (reviewed on CD) —Dan Ouellette

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Stan Getz

SERENITY—EmArcy 838 770-2: *ON GREEN DOLPHIN STREET; VOYAGE; FALLING IN LOVE; I REMEMBER YOU; I LOVE YOU.* (55:53)

Personnel: Getz, tenor saxophone; Kenny Barron, piano; Rufus Reid, bass; Victor Lewis, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

No Stan Getz Quartet collection is without value, and neither is *Serenity*, the second and latest of two albums recorded live in July 1987 in Copenhagen. The first was EmArcy's *Anniversary* from 1989. My main criticism is a fairly straightforward and objective one: two of the album's five pieces—Barron's "Voyage" and Vic Feldman's Strayhornish "Falling In Love," or nearly half its playing time—were recorded in more definitive studio performances the previous year and with substantially the same group. Remember *Voyage* on Blackhawk Records, released in early 1987?

The versions here are longer, especially "Voyage," but not necessarily larger. Brevity is a healthy discipline.

Nevertheless, the Getz-Barron combination had become one of jazz' most elite peerages in recent years and further documentation is welcome, regardless of repertoire. There is a sureness, clarity, and grace in the late Getz'

playing that is as strong as at anytime over the years. As someone said recently about NBA wizard Michael Jordan, when you make the miraculous routine, the merely excellent becomes ordinary. There may be no miracles here. But there are no disappointments either. (reviewed on CD)
—John McDonough



Jack Walrath

GUT FEELINGS—Muse MCD 5422: *THE SERPENT'S KISS; JUMP MONK; ADAGIO FOR STRINGS AND ORGAN; GAGAKU; BLUES IN THE GUTS; FAITH.* (70:02)

Personnel: Walrath, trumpet; Carter Jefferson, tenor, soprano saxophones; Mike Cochrane, piano; Anthony Cox, bass; Ronnie Burrage, drums; Amy Hirage, Rob Shaw, Peter Winograd, Charles Barker, violin; Maria Lambros Kannen, David Cerutti, viola; Peter Wyrick, Peter Sanders, cello.

★ ★ ★ 1/2

I hesitate to call this adventurous album Third Stream, for fear the bad press that term has received over the years might turn off more listeners than it would attract. But Walrath does attempt a blending of jazz and classical ele-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 59

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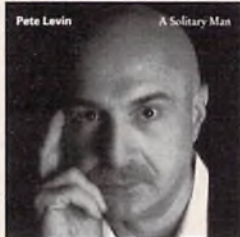
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Aydin Esen

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PETE LEVIN

A Solitary Man

Keyboardist Pete Levin's skills shine as he takes us through the blues, traditional jazz and fusion with panache and style. Also featured: saxophonist Alex Foster, percussionist Manolo Badrena, drummer Cliff Almond and the incredible electric bassist Jeff Berlin. (Gramavision 79457)

GRAMAVISION

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1 George Benson

"My Three Sons" (from *THE NEW BOSS GUITAR OF GEORGE BENSON*, Prestige) Benson, guitar; Jack McDuff, organ; Red Holloway, tenor sax; Joe Dukes, drums.

Man, I love this stuff. Organ quartet with the foot pedals going . . . that's the baddest shit. My favorite stuff. It's a shame people can't make a real good living doing that. It just takes so much time and study and patience to be able to play that kind of stuff and it doesn't seem to be commercially acceptable. It's a crime. I'd almost say this is Kenny Burrell, but he's too quick. It's gotta be George Benson. This is George when he was real young. He's really come a long way since then. He got really good real fast, somehow or another.

It seemed like out of the blue he came up with these amazing chops. This is not the hottest thing I've ever heard George do, but I love the whole sound of the band. Anything like that, I'm gonna love. The groove, the feeling of that stuff wins with me. Absolutely wonderful. But if you're relating this tune to the level that George Benson rose to as a jazz guitarist, it's probably 2½ stars. Maybe not even that good compared to how far he came. I mean, it's real good but I heard him do a lot more amazing things, like the album he did with Jimmy Smith on Elektra/Musician about five years ago. Absolutely destroyed me. The growth from this album to that one is amazing.

2 Tal Farlow

"The Way You Look Tonight" (from *POPPIN' AND BURNIN'*, Verve) Farlow, guitar; Hank Jones, piano; Ray Brown, bass; Louie Bellson, drums.

It's either Kenny Burrell, Herb Ellis, or Tal Farlow. All three of those guys have the same tone. Yeah, man, wonderful lines. This must be Tal. He's gotta be one of the innovators of that outside style. Where the hell did he get all that? Wonderful. That's real clean. Sometimes Tal Farlow is not real clean on some of the things I've heard. This is real old, probably from '57 or so. Man, that sounds good. That's a 5.

3 Al Di Meola & Les Paul

"Spanish Eyes" (from *SPLENDIDO HOTEL*, Columbia) Di Meola and Paul, guitars; Anthony Jackson, bass; Steve Gadd, drums.

Boy, that's got a nice feel. Nice tone, very nice texture on the guitars. I know the song. It's "Spanish Eyes," of course. I don't have a clue who's doing it. Not yet, I don't. Pick bass . . . I love pick bass. I hear a little Les Paul influence in there. This sounds like a

DANNY GATTON

by Bill Milkowski

Throughout the '70s, Danny Gatton was known by only a select few around the Washington, D.C.-Maryland area. Guitar enthusiasts would crowd into small nightclubs where he played to marvel at his virtuosity and versatility. Gatton gained a cult following that eventually spread throughout the East Coast on the strength of his independently-produced albums (*American Music* in '75, *Redneck Jazz* in '78, *Unfinished Business* in '88).

All the music media hoopla led to record company interest and ultimately to Gatton's signing last year with Elektra Records. His major-label debut, *88 Elmira Street*, was recently released to wide acclaim. A well-produced sampler of the American music styles that Gatton has always loved (rockabilly, blues, rock, and jazz), *88 Elmira Street* has led to the kind of exposure that the guitarist had never dreamed of before—radio-play, records in all the major chains, a



guest shot on *Late Night With David Letterman*, and his first European tour. The secret is out: Danny Gatton has arrived (see *DB* April '91). This was his first Blindfold Test.

Gretsch guitar. It's not Chet Atkins and Mark Knopfler, is it? I never heard that new record and I never heard Mark Knopfler, so I wouldn't know what he'd sound like at all. Hmm . . . that was nice. God, who's out there that can play scales that fast? John McLaughlin? It's not Al Di Meola, is it?

BM: It's Al and Les.

DG: Les is in here? That's what I mistook for the Gretsch. It's that guitar of his. I wonder who's playing the real fast licks. They both can. That must be Di Meola doing the real fast ones. Boy, he's really good. That's excellent. This is gonna get a 5 out of me, man. I like that groove and all that. That's beautiful.

4 Lonnie Mack

"Chicken Pickin'" (from *THE WHAM OF THAT MEMPHIS MAN*, Alligator) Mack, guitar; David Byrd, keyboards; Bill Jones, bass; Ron Grayson, drums; Marv Lieberman and Irv Russotto, saxes.

Lonnie Mack. Unmistakable sound . . . tone, lines, the Bigsby thing, the Magnatone. Lonnie Mack's got balls this big. And he's such a humble guy. He doesn't think he plays really well, but he gets the maximum out of every note he plays. A lot of guys play a lot of notes but they don't get any tone. Lonnie Mack had tone from year one. 5 stars. I love Lonnie Mack. He can do no wrong.

5 Lenny Breau

"Mercy Mercy" (from *THE VELVET TOUCH OF LENNY BREAU—LIVE*, RCA) Breau, solo electric guitar.

Oh, it's Lenny, of course. This record was made in '68, live at Shelly's Manne Hole in L.A., when he was about 23 or something. Played a tuned-down 12-string Baldwin guitar. Listen to this! Nobody did this shit! Nobody! He invented all this stuff . . . the harmonics, the droning, the chordal voicings, nails on the pickguard, everything. He was the best that ever lived, bar none. He played more stuff at one time than anybody on the planet . . . with *feeling* and tone. Man, it was humiliating to have come and sit in. You'd wanna crawl under a table. This is just beautiful. I wore this record out so bad I had to get another one. If I had to go to an island and only take one guy's stuff, it would be his. No comparison to anything that ever existed.

He just wasn't content to learn how to play the average stuff, man. He was hungry to do it all. McCoy Tyner and Bill Evans were his big influences. He got to live with Bill Evans for a year and study with him. And he's young here on this recording. He got so much better than that later on when he got heavily into playing seven-string guitar. Amazing. That gets 100 stars. Nothing's better than him. Nobody . . . even my man Les is number two to Lenny. DB