

MILES PLAYS GIL, SLAYS MONTREUX

DOWNBEAT

Jazz, Blues & Beyond

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Phil & Chris Rap

DB Exclusive!

Buddy Guy

50 Million Riff Thieves Can't Be Wrong!

Freddie Hubbard

*From A&M University
(Art & Miles, that is)*

Charlie Watts

Impersonating A Jazz Drummer

Jazz In Advertising



*Alto legend Phil Woods
and upstart Christopher Hollyday*



MARCO MINOLITI

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DAVID ALLEN

Altos



PHOTOS BY MARCO MINOLITI

on the Adriatic

By Fred Bouchard

When young cat hangs with old cat, what fur may fly? When both pad round the globe, what fence be yowled upon? When one plays bebop and one plays rebop, what Bird be shared? Two altoists—one near 60, one barely legal—came to play at Pescara's 19th annual jazz festival, on Italy's family (Adriatic) Riviera.

Phil Woods—perennial winner of DB's Readers and Critics polls and one of the most identifiable and voluminously recorded alto masters in history—has nurtured a long love affair with Italy and cruises the “canneloni circuit” of summer jazz festivals, taking a busman's holiday from his ever-evolving Quintet.

Christopher Hollyday, a marvelous young musician keeping a cool head amid the Roman candles of the media, saw Pescara as one stop on a very busy schedule—he takes logistics as seriously as repertoire—which found him playing the Jazzboat back in hometown Boston two weeks later. Christopher and Phil met for the first time at Rome airport, though both were born in Massachusetts: handshake, a hearty “hey,” and a hug. They jammed. Phil invited Christopher on stage for his encore—at 2 a.m.!—with the Space Jazz Trio, and their streamlined “Au Privave” climaxed in spirited fours. They talked. Camaraderie and understanding came as instantaneously as their electrifying jam mark the dialogue recorded below.

Phil took charge with questions and sage one-liners while Christopher was deferential, earnest, alert. They chatted long after the tapes stopped rolling over a long sunny lunch by the sea they spoke of Al Cohn, AIDS, long tones, bass fishing, R.R. Kirk, Italy, the road . . . Just the start of a beautiful friendship.



Fred Bouchard: *I'll just moderate, stay in the booth like a good record producer, let you guys trade fours like last night. (all laugh)*

Phil Woods: Actually, I have some questions for Chris. Let me preface that by saying I think the alto's in real good shape. This man can play the saxophone. I think Bird and Rabbit [Charlie Parker and Johnny Hodges, granddaddy of Massachusetts alto saxophonists] would be very pleased.

Christopher Hollyday: *(nods thanks)*

PW: Where do you see yourself taking the music? It seems to be the first time in music history that the new generation is sort of a throwback. There's danger in jazz becoming a trad bag; then it stops growing. The form is strong, but I'm curious about you, because I hear you doing different stuff.

CH: Well, obviously my roots are in the '40s and '50s, but I've been checking everything out. I try to keep an open mind to all possibilities with improvisation.

PW: Do you have any interest in the electronic aspects of music?

CH: Um, well, I haven't really ruled it out, but at this point, I want to concentrate on acoustic . . .

PW: *(hastily)* Grazie! [Thank you.] *(chuckles)*

CH: There's still a lot of work that I'd like to do in acoustic music. I really try to listen to all I can get my hands on and incorporate that, including blues and world beat.

PW: Your band is super, by the way. Those cats can really play. World class. Very professional.

CH: Thank you. I agree. We have a really good time.

PW: Jackie McLean and I were talking about you on the phone, in case your ears were burning. He has the greatest words of pleasure for your work.

CH: Yeah? That's great. I think the world of him.

PW: Do you play the clarinet?

CH: I studied clarinet for about six months and flute, as well. That was the stage before I was really trying to figure out my style and work on my alto sound and was just learning instruments. Slowly, the alto would seep back in. It got so that the other instrument would just sit under the bed, and then I'd stop paying rental fees on it.

PW: When I came up everybody said, "Get a flute. You'll make more bread." Those were the days of big bands and studio dates, when commercials had five saxes and Manny Albam wrote the charts. Well, I had a wife and family, making bread made sense. But that's not why I took up music, to make bread. Anybody who thinks that playing more instruments means making more bread has it all ass backwards! Today, the studio scene is three guys, synthesizers, and an EWI. There's no big band scene, either.

CH: I played with Maynard Ferguson's 60th Birthday Band—it was only together a couple of months—as a soloist out front. I was really glad to have that experience.

FB: *Your only other big band was the Norwood [Mass.] High Band under Paul Alberta?*

CH: Right, from the eighth grade through the 10th. I joined the year [his trumpeter brother] Richard graduated. They let me in young because I'd been doing things independently in clubs. [Drummer] Alan Dawson, [pianist] James Williams and [saxophonist] Bill Pierce were great about letting me sit in.

PW: Did you do the Berklee thing?

CH: No.

PW: Good.

CH: I learned to play in my bedroom and the 1369 Jazz Club. [Hollyday stars in *A Place For Jazz*, a jazz documentary about the late, lamented Boston club, scheduled for national distribution in 1992.] By the time I got out of high school, I'd played most Boston clubs. It was time I moved to New York.

PW: Playing with older cats is a missing ingredient today. When I was a kid I played with Budd Johnson and kept my mouth shut. You learned a lot. There's no place to meet anymore—except airports! *(all laugh)*

CH: Absolutely. It was important to learn the information they had, me being so young. That was a head start.

PW: It's still a royal tradition, a codified jazz education. I've been worried for 30 years about [kids] "majoring" in jazz. It's nice that it has respectability, but don't expect to get a gig with it! It's bad enough we have too many lawyers, but too many tenor players is just not fair to the kids. It's become a jazz industry.

CH: I think the best way to learn jazz is the way you and I did: by playing with older musicians and really loving it.

PW: I went to Juilliard in 1947 to study clarinet, but my real purpose was to check Bird out. I cooled out my family by telling them I wanted to study Mozart. It did make me a better musician. Never mind majoring in jazz—major in music! If you understand Bach you get a better picture of where Bird is at. And vice versa. Have you met Benny Carter?

CH: No I haven't yet. I'd like to.

PW: He'd love you. Charlie Parker has obviously been my hero and your hero, but

as I get older, I think the real challenge is carrying your horn around 80 years, playing all your life with no excesses, no drug habit, no notoriety, just quietly going about your business as a super musician.

FB: *Benny Carter [8/8/07] and Benny Waters [1/23/02]—those are the cats!*

PW: Right! Though a statistical study showed that the median life expectancy of a jazz musician was 42, giants like Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, and Benny Carter are still creating in their 70s and 80s. How's your schedule? Pretty busy?

CH: Really busy. You know how important it is that everything go smoothly on the road.

PW: They don't pay us to play; they pay us to get there.

FB: *[to Hollyday] How are the chores of leadership sitting on your shoulders? Are you taking everything in stride? Do you feel tension about managing the band? Do you worry about repertoire?*

CH: Yes to all those questions. As a leader, you're responsible to many people: to members of your band, to your audience. Being a leader is more than having your name on a program.

PW: Yeah yeah, baby.

CH: Being a good leader means making sure the music is right and not making people mad.

PW: And gaining the respect of the audience by communicating.

CH: That makes everything much easier. Even in foreign countries, they can still see the sincerity in your eyes. The strength of the music is incredible. I'm running into that now, after concerts, people telling you little funny things. I hope they'll be back, too.

*"Never mind majoring in jazz—
major in music!
If you understand Bach
you get a better picture of where Bird is at.
And vice versa."*



PW: It's a lifetime thing in Europe. People of my generation who went to Birdland as kids may now be home watching reruns of *The Waltons*. They don't get out much. On this side [of the Atlantic], they keep comin'. Jazz is very important to those who love it. When the American government wants to put its best foot forward, it sends Dizzy. And yet we don't get any support. From the Reagan legacy on, less than 1 percent of the NEA money went to jazz, folk, and ethnic. The rest went to Mahler!

CH: Our music is about art, and when you mix in money it can get messed up.

"I think the real challenge is carrying your horn around 80 years, playing all your life with no excesses, no drug habit, no notoriety, just quietly going about your business as a super musician."



PW: That's the peculiar niche jazz occupies. It's not really art because it's so close to the street. It's not really entertainment, although you're supposed to entertain and be nice, like Louis. The fight goes on! Some day our country will appreciate jazz.

CH: Right.

PW: I've heard some rock & roll saxophone players who get the limos and recognition because they happened to have played with Prince once, and they can't blow their nose! You're getting a fair shake, at least. What would you do if you got a chance to play with Sting?

CH: It would have to depend on the music, very strongly. If I went into a studio and played their music with my interpretation, and they said, "No, no, we want you to play it like so-and-so," I'd say, "Well, you might as well go and get him. I sound like Christopher Hollyday." Both sounds are equally marketable. It's up to the artist to draw the line where money is the factor.

PW: If you stick by your guns, the rewards will be greater in the long run. [Some] guys go for the short buck and do okay. Branford [Marsalis] had his head on straight so that he could go the limo route with Sting and then turn around and take the subway to the Village Vanguard. Hey, go grab some bread, as long as you don't have to be a whore about it. When I did the Billy Joel thing, it was a Tin Pan Alley song with regular changes. But when Earth, Wind & Fire asked me to do something, I said I didn't think I could contribute.

CH: That's where you draw the line. You say, "I'm Phil Woods and I'm better off playing with my quartet with my own style and voice." I feel the same way.

FB: [to Hollyday] *In the course of your six albums, there's been a perceptible ripening and deepening of your tone, and more focus. I can hear quantum leaps with each release, almost tangible.*

CH: [to Phil] I would say that you think you're still developing.

PW: I think you come to the point where you say, "This is my voice." You must experiment.

CH: Absolutely!

PW: I'm a stodgy, acoustic guy. I had the first wah-wah pedal in Europe and the Varitone and all that nonsense, but I still have a lot to learn. I've made a conscious choice: my strongest suit is melody,



The Bebopper and the Rebopper

chord changes, and variations. If I could've changed the course of Western music, I'd've done it years ago. I'm just tryin' to do mah thang!

CH: You've chosen the road and now you're traveling on it.

PW: Atonality does not interest me. You only know what outside is if you learn the inside!

CH: I'm interested in music that's free, or outside, too.

PW: The variety's very important. There are so many ways to go. Bird set the pace, playing in two keys, rhythmic displacement. He could trick a rhythm section in a minute. You're conditioned to hear a metric pulse, and he moves it one beat away. Bags used to warn the rhythm: "Don't listen to Bird!"

PW: What's your practice schedule like?

CH: I work on breathing, articulation. I try to get to the center of the sound. When you get there, you know it. I listen to [my tapes] to check out what I was doing right or wrong.

PW: That's the secret. I tell students if you want to get a sound, play [long tones] 10 minutes, morning and night. Everybody's horn and setup and physiognomy's different. When that note is vibrating and your chops are right, you can almost see it comin' outta there. How do you like listening to yourself?

CH: Oh, I love it. If you don't like listening to yourself, how can you expect anyone else to?

PW: Yeah, baby! You can be critical, but you can still accept some things you're doing. This is okay, this needs work . . .

CH: One great thing about a working band, as you know, is to see

the little things people do night after night become part of the arrangement.

PW: Many groups overlook that. Head, jam, out. Your front line is united in a common purpose without being overly arranged.

CH: The guys are trying to use all the timbres and colors, as your guys do. Different tempos. Use it all.

PW: Sure: bring the piano in a third away, harmony or unison, bass melody, melody drums. So many ways to go.

FB: Yeah, Phil, you've had 18 years to cultivate that with the High G's [Steve Gilmore and Bill Goodwin].

PW: I got somethin' on them.

CH: That's almost my entire life! I think it's important that whomever you work with be able to complement what you're doing artistically. It has seemed so natural; I hope it continues to be. It's like family; you trust this person, so you need that spiritual connection.

PW: I'd rather win the respect of my peers than any number of polls. If you sell out on them, it'll be your ass later . . .

CH: The first time I met and played with Dizzy Gillespie, we sat and talked for three hours about our fathers; weird stuff. Nothing about music! It was so educational.

PW: You're talking royalty here. And Benny Carter. We can count our blessings that we have such royalty with us. He was around when jazz was invented, with Louis.

FB: Tell me about your horns.

PW: I got my Selmer in 1959 in Paris. Budd Johnson and I were with Quincy [Jones]'s band. Henri [Selmer] was still alive. We must've tried 30 horns. He gave us a deal: \$150 with a \$75 trade-in. So I narrow it to three horns. We ask if we can come back the next day. Same thing: we go through another 30. We didn't want to make the final cut! Suddenly we hear these dulcet sounds—the maestro, Marcel Mule, in for his monthly quality check. He spent the whole day with us!

CH: Wow! This is the horn I learned to play on at the 1369 Club. Yup. Emilio Lyons sold me this horn. He did right by me. Now I'm looking for another horn, as a backup. We're playing so much, you never know. I learned a good lesson about a year ago. I got off the stage after a set and people started crowding around me to sign this and that, and my horn kept getting bumped. Now I go straight to the dressing room.

PW: Or else you'll have a straight horn!

FB: What do you guys listen to recreationally these days?

PW: [Francis] Poulenc. *Stabat Mater*, the organ mass, the *Gloria*. He's become my fixation. They've just reissued the [Charles] Ives *Violin Sonatas*; I'm checkin' those out. How about you?

CH: I'm still listening to Ray Charles and B.B. King. And world music—from India.

FB: One more thing. How about quotes in solos? Phil, you threaded a bunch of them into "Chet" [Pierannunzi's pretty tribute to trumpeter Baker] last night.

PW: Oh, there's no end to my cheap vulgarizations.

FB: Well, are they an important part of the jazz vernacular, or cuteness, or a subconscious regurgitation of bebop ideas?

PW: I try to send a message. Bird and Louis did it all the time. If Benny Carter walks in, you try to play "Pom Pom." It's oral communication, and the only ones who pick up on it are those who know the music.

CH: It's a little like this conversation, inside jokes between the three of us that we all get. You can also quote a tune the band is rehearsing. I'm serious about my music, but at the same time, I want to have some fun out there. DB



EQUIPMENT

Phil Woods plays the Selmer Mark VI alto he bought at the Paris factory in 1959. He uses an Meyer 5M mouthpiece and La Voz medium hard reeds. "My clarinet," he said, "is a 1937 Selmer BT that Emilio Lyons found for me after my Buffet burned in the fire [that destroyed his home in Delaware Water Gap, PA]. "This instrument is a classic: it really speaks in the acoustic context of my band. This is the model played by Benny Goodman and Artie Shaw." With it, Woods uses Vandoren medium reeds and a Selmer F mouthpiece.

Woods currently uses a Roland D-10 keyboard with a patcher for writing and arranging. He has a Proteus synthesizer on order. He's experimenting with MPP (Music Printer Plus) and puts all his lead sheets on a Tandy (Radio Shack) computer. He uses a Q&A word-processing package in writing his autobiography, *Life In E-Flat*.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

- | | |
|---|--|
| <i>REAL LIFE</i> —Chesky 47 | <i>MY MAN BENNY, MY MAN PHIL</i> —MusicMasters 5036-2-C (w/Benny Carter) |
| <i>ALL BIRD'S CHILDREN</i> —Concord Jazz 4441 | <i>THE OLE DUDE AND THE FUNDANCE KID</i> —Uptown 2719 (w/Budd Johnson) |
| <i>BOP STEW</i> —Concord Jazz 4345 | <i>ALTOLOGY</i> —Prestige 26045 (w/Gene Quill) |
| <i>BOUQUET</i> —Concord Jazz 4377 | <i>PHIL WOODS/LEW TABACKIN</i> —Omni-sound 1033 |
| <i>HERE'S TO MY LADY</i> —Chesky 3 (w/Tommy Flanagan) | <i>PHIL WOODS QUARTET: VOLUME ONE</i> —Clean Cuts 702 |
| <i>EVOLUTION</i> —Concord Jazz 4361 | <i>PIPER AT THE GATES OF DAWN</i> —Sea Breeze 2019 (w/Chris Swanson) |
| <i>FLASH</i> —Concord Jazz 4408 | <i>RIGHTS OF SWING</i> —Candid 5016 |
| <i>LIVE FROM THE SHOWBOAT</i> —RCA/Novus 3104 | |
| <i>MUSIQUE DU BOIS</i> —Muse 5037 (w/Jaki Byard, Alan Dawson) | |



EQUIPMENT

Christopher Hollyday plays a Selmer Mark VI alto saxophone with a Meyer 5 medium-chamber rubber mouthpiece. He uses a Rico Royal saxophone reed of medium stiffness. This setup was recommended many years ago by his good friend Emilio Lyons of Rayburn Music in Boston.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| as a leader | <i>REVERENCE</i> —RBI 402 |
| <i>THE NATURAL MOMENT</i> —RCA/Novus 3118 | <i>OH, BROTHER!</i> —Jazzbeat 102 |
| <i>ON COURSE</i> —RCA/Novus 3087 | <i>TREATY</i> —Jazzbeat 101 |
| <i>CHRISTOPHER HOLLYDAY</i> —RCA/Novus 3055 | with Maynard Ferguson |
| | <i>BIG BOP NOUVEAU</i> —Intima 73390 |

50 Million Riff Thieves Can't Be Wrong

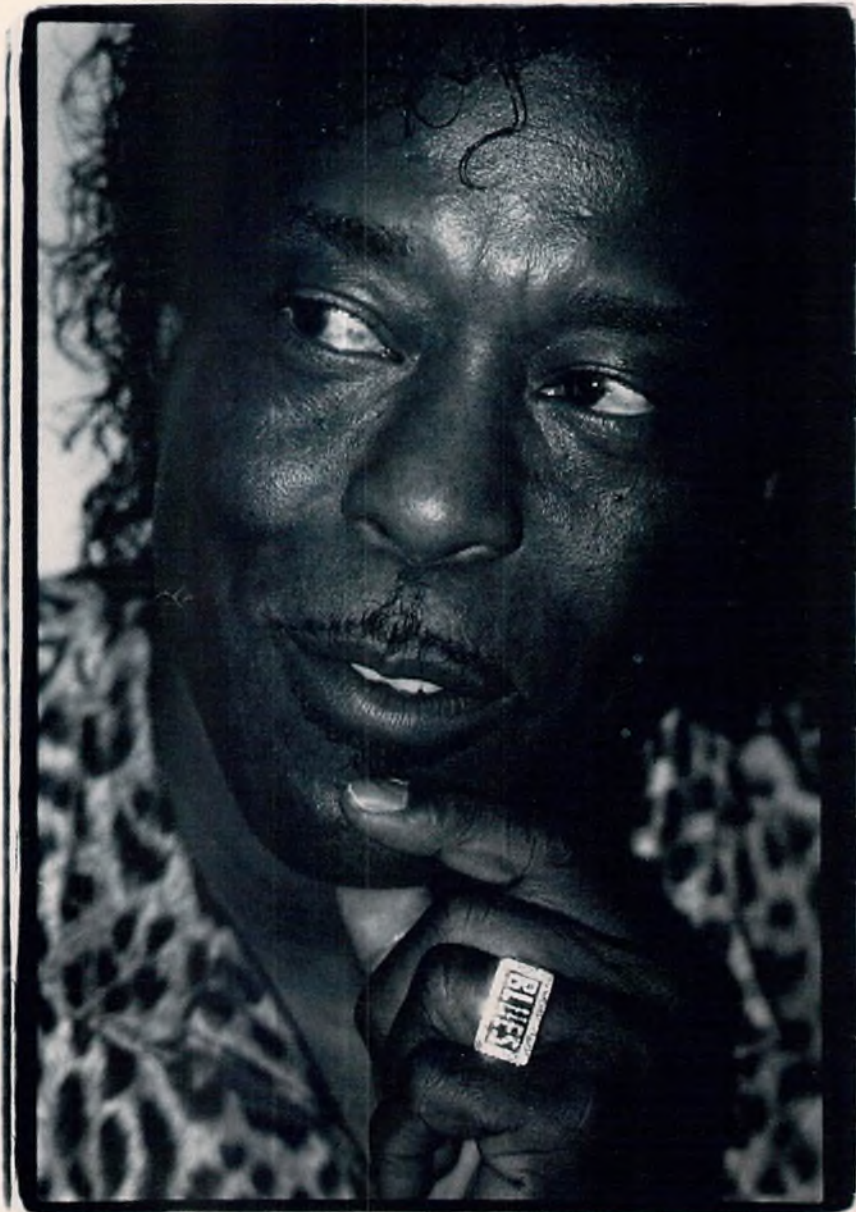
BUDDY GUY

By David Whiteis

The first thing that impresses you about Buddy Guy is his composure. Listening to the wracked emotionality of his records—his Chicago blues classics on labels like Artistic and Chess from the late '50s and early '60s, or more recent outings like *Blues Giant* (recorded in France and released in the U.S. as *Stone Crazy!* on Alligator)—one might expect to find him a haunted figure, broken down from a lifetime of fighting demons or maybe hardened with bitterness and despair.

But a few days after returning from Europe and only 24 hours before embarking on a U.S. tour, he sat in the private office of his downtown Chicago nightclub, Buddy Guy's Legends, and flashed a tired, jet-lagged smile. In his sanctuary, Guy sipped a drink and quietly reflected on the ironies surrounding his career and the legions of young white bluesmen who've followed in his wake.

Guy has been hailed by everyone from Muddy Waters to Eric Clapton as one of Chicago blues' most accomplished artists. His slashing guitar arpeggios and throat-tearing vocals helped propel Chicago blues into a new era over 30 years ago. Yet, like James Brown he seems to have spent much of his life feeling that he had to work a little harder, do something more than everyone else, if he wanted to hold his own.



HERB SNITZER

He radiates confidence to the point of invincibility when he's onstage firing off his thunderous metallic onslaughts, wrenching lyrics from his throat in an agonized, constricted wail, playing behind his back and over his head in the style he learned as a young man from Guitar Slim in Louisiana. But he says he developed those flamboyant mannerisms largely because he was afraid he wasn't good enough to make it on his music alone.

"I didn't ever stop to think that it was so special," he says now about the aggression with which he attacked the blues back in the '50s. "When I came to Chicago, most guitar players were sitting in chairs—it was all sit-down like an orchestra was reading the music or something. I would go hear these people play and I could see they was the

best guitar players. I didn't want to get stuck into just one type of guitar playing, because I never was good as the people I'm talking about. So I had to figure out how to do something, maybe to get a chance."

There were other exciting performers around, of course: Howlin' Wolf would burst off the bandstand, roll around on the floor, even leap onto the bar and stalk with lupine ferocity above his audience; Muddy Waters could work crowds into a frenzy with his near-convulsive lurching about and declamatory vocals. But seldom had a Chicago bluesman combined showmanship with dazzling musical pyrotechnics as Buddy Guy did.

Along with other young Chicago guitarists like Otis Rush and Magic Sam, Guy fused raw electric intensity with dexterity in a way

that virtually revolutionized blues expression. It was that sound, a piercing wail that seemed to reflect the rage and torment of a young man's yearnings tempered with heretofore undreamed-of musical flash, that captured the imagination of young white blues aspirants in the '60s.

When Guy first went to England in 1965, he found a legion of lads hanging onto his every note, absorbing each screaming phrase, staring in open-mouthed amazement at the audacity



Buddy Guy and Albert Collins tear it up at Legends.

of his stage show. But the forces he'd helped unleash on popular music would come back to haunt him. After infusing the blues with incendiary new energy, he soon found himself accused of copying styles he'd helped invent.

He relates the stories with a quiet sense of irony. When he began touring in 1967, white crowds responded to his flashy playing and tricks by shouting, "You've been watching Hendrix!" At the time, Guy says, he didn't even know who Hendrix was.

It's still going on, and it gets tiresome. "Three, four, five months ago I was playing in Kentucky, and a reporter came to see the show, but he didn't talk to me or anything.

"He stated in this write-up that Buddy Guy was hot last night, but he was playing 'white licks.' And I know what he meant, but I would like for him to explain that better—what is a 'white lick'? I've never seen a write-up in the paper saying [Jeff] Beck was hot, or Stevie [Ray Vaughan] was hot, but he was playing a 'black lick'!

"Because Eric could tell you these are Buddy licks. I had a manager once, Dick Waterman, and he told me the same thing—he said, 'You should play some of your traditional stuff; don't go up there and play Eric's stuff!' Eric and I's friends, and I was

kidding Eric about 'Strange Brew' [from Cream's *Disraeli Gears*]. I said, 'Man, those are some bad licks on 'Strange Brew'! He said, 'It should be; it's yours!'"

Then there are the purists who wish he'd tone down the showmanship, cool the jets, and get back to playing in the more subtle, pre-'60s Chicago tradition. Buddy's sold out to rock, they argue; he's allowed flash to take the place of art.

"Some writers and reporters come to see me," he responds, "and it seems like to me, from what I would read, they wanted me to

these sessions, a combination of standards and originals, Guy's passionate vocals are supported by shimmering extended leads broken up by furious multi-note barrages. The rhythmic groove sometimes approaches Cream's patented slow blues-rock explosions rather than an energetic Chicago shuffle. It's bombast with a feeling, impeccably played but charged throughout with searing energy. The disc is sure to fuel the Buddy Guy debate among those who like to debate such things. For his part, Guy fervently hopes it'll finally propel him into the limelight he deserves.

"I promised my wife and my family that I didn't want to hear [the new recording], 'cause I've never had a big record. And I'm not into the superstitious stuff, I just said maybe if I don't listen to it somebody else'll come up and tell me, say 'You got one!' I want somebody else to tell me it made it, or almost made it, or it's the biggest thing you ever had. And then I'm gonna sit down and take a good listen to it."

After all these years, the man who once sang a nightmarish scenario about being chased through the woods by a demon called the blues ("First Time I Met The Blues" on Chess in 1960) is still restless and unsure, hoping that his magnificent gifts are sufficient to put him over. He's conscious of his place in history, but not ready to suggest that it's a throne.

"Throughout my career I've played good notes, I guess, and some bad notes some nights, and then these young kids will come in and play a note and I look at myself and say, 'Jesus Christ—what did he play? And I been had that thing in my hand for years, how come I couldn't find that?' As long as there's music, there's gonna be a young person come up and do something that me or Muddy Waters or somebody else could not do. But we left a path there for them to improve." **DB**

EQUIPMENT

"Finally Fender got a Buddy Guy Strat," Guy said with satisfaction. "It was so close to what Eric plays that they didn't want to put it on the market. But a little over a year ago they called me and said, 'We're getting quite a few calls,' and they was gonna put it on the market. I haven't seen it yet.

"I'm using the Buddy Guy . . . they made one for me. I use a Dunlop wah-wah, because some people ask me to play the Hendrix licks, and I guess they do that because Hendrix made the

remark that he got some things from me, and I like to hear that every once in awhile. I use the Shure Brothers microphones, and the Fender people put out the Fender Bassman amplifier, which is what I was using when Eric and Beck and them was getting those licks from me, that was the amp then. It had a sound that no amplifier has come up with yet. Those tricky flashy notes I was getting, I think that amp had a lot to do with it."

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader

DAMN RIGHT I'VE GOT THE BLUES—Silvertone 1462
STONE CRAZY!—Alligator 4723
A MAN AND THE BLUES—Vanguard 79272
HOLD THAT PLANE!—Vanguard 79323
THIS IS BUDDY GUY—Vanguard 79290
I WAS WALKIN' THROUGH THE WOODS—Chess 9315

LEFT MY BLUES IN SAN FRANCISCO—Chess 9262

with Junior Wells

DRINKING' TNT 'N' SMOKIN' DYNAMITE—Blind Pig 1182
ORIGINAL BLUES BROTHERS LIVE—Intermedia 5004
HOODOO MAN BLUES—Delmark 612



DAVID ALLEN

Miles Plays Gil

At Montreux

By Bill Milkowski

He has said "Time After Time" that he would never again tread on old musical ground, that it was against his "Human Nature" to go backward and play music from the past.

Well, miracles do happen.

It started with a fax from Montreux Jazz Festival founder Claude Nobs to the late Gil Evans' widow, Anita, saying that Quincy Jones had this marvelous idea. He wanted to recreate live *Sketches Of Spain*, the classic Miles Davis album arranged and orchestrated by Evans. The catch? Quincy wanted Miles, in person, to play it as part of the festival's 25th anniversary.

"When Quincy first called me, I said, 'Of course we'd like to do it, but I can't imagine Miles doing it,'" said Anita, who provided some of Gil's original charts for the project. "'You don't have a problem here, you just gotta talk Miles Davis into it.' And Quincy said, 'I already have. I used love. I've been on him. I told him it would be my dream come true to do it.'"

With that, a miracle was conceived, nurtured, and born. Miles, for the first time, accepted the challenge to go back more than 30 years and perform the arrangements of Gil Evans from not only *Sketches Of Spain*, but also from *Birth Of The Cool*, *Miles Ahead*, and *Porgy & Bess*.

Billed as "L'Evenement" (The Event), the festival grounds buzzed with anticipation. Could Miles, the renegade of the cutting edge, turn back time? Could he leave his funk and fusion trappings backstage and, for one fine evening, embrace these classic scores? After all these years, did he still have the chops to put his muted touch on complicated Gil Evans arrangements?

"I called up Quincy after the first rehearsal and said, 'You know, we really gotta get Miles,'" said arranger Gil Goldstein, who transcribed a great deal of the material.

"Then I started to get nervous about Miles being able to play all of this stuff without coming to a rehearsal, because it's a hell of a lot of music. It's like classical music. You have to play it with the orchestra."

Miles didn't attend rehearsals in New York, where a combination of the Gil Evans Orchestra and the George Gruntz Concert Jazz Band met to prepare for the gig. He opted to catch up with the band at Montreux.

"But, I did bring the music to his house before he left, just so he could start looking at it," Goldstein said. "The first rehearsal in Montreux was full of confusion. A million things were still up in the air as far as details of what was really gonna happen. People were uptight about various business issues. It was just a kind of nervous not-knowing-what-was-going-to-happen environment. Quincy showed up at 2 p.m. That was the first time we had actually met face to face."

"By 11 p.m., Miles showed up. It was unbelievable, just the perfect entry for

Miles Davis. We were rehearsing 'Boplicity' [from *Birth Of The Cool*] and he just kind of walked in right at the first phrase, sat down, and started taking out his horn."

The next evening, Miles received a hero's welcome as he made his way to the Casino stage and took his place before the 45-piece ensemble. With Quincy conducting, they opened with the lush, lightly swinging "Boplicity." And, from the first notes, all doubts were erased. The crowd was transported to jazz heaven.

One of the most enraptured listeners in the house was Quincy himself, who conducted the piece with obvious glee, smiling like a child on Christmas morning. After the number, he remarked to the crowd, "This is a great way to feel 17 again."

The sight of Miles Davis performing this classic material from the 1950s was like watching Muhammed Ali climb back into the ring with his jab intact. For jazz purists, it was a monumental comeback, a welcome

return to the fold after years of jiving and vamping. Miles showed up and delivered the goods, blowing with the kind of confidence, soulful phrasing, and dramatic power that few critics thought he still had in him.

Sitting up-front alongside Miles were soloists Wallace Roney on trumpet and Kenny Garrett on alto saxophone. Roney functioned as a kind of safety net, occasionally doubling Miles' parts. This not only relieved Miles of any pressure of having to cut the difficult passages single-handedly, it also freed him up to take greater liberties with the melodies through his own adventurous phrasing.

The Miles magic was very much intact throughout the *Miles Ahead* medley. His seductive, muted trumpet work on "Springsville" and "My Ship" caused audible sighs from the audience and had Roney shaking his head in disbelief. The tone was captivating, unmistakably Miles;

IN SEARCH OF

NO one said it would be easy, but no one expected piecing together the charts for *Miles Plays Gil* to be as difficult as it was, either.

"Initially, nobody could find the music," said Anita Evans, Gil Evans' widow. "Gil always told me that the scores were over at Miles' house in New York. But when Cicely [Tyson, one of Miles' ex-wives] sold that house, only she knew where the stuff in the basement went. Miles said as far as he knew, Cicely had the music. But Quincy called her and she said she didn't. Finally, [Gil's sons] Noah and Miles started digging up some of Gil's old stuff that hadn't seen the light of day in 30 years. And, what they came up with were rough sketches of the charts, things that Gil had worked on before completing the official score for the record. Most of it was on score paper . . . incredibly precious stuff, like Gil's brain on a piece of paper. So, I sent those to Quincy and he looked them over. At this point, Gil Goldstein became very important to the project in helping Quincy make sense of Gil's charts."

"Finding those rough sketches of Gil's charts was like finding the Dead Sea Scrolls of jazz," Goldstein remarked. "It freaked me out when I saw them. No real complete scores, but really historical kinds of sketches on music paper. It was just unbelievably fascinating to see this stuff and have it in your hands."

"I already had full scores for 'Blues For Pablo' and 'Springsville,' which Gil had given me when I took some quasi-lessons with him when he was still here. So, I had a head start on those two. The rest I had to just fill in the blanks by



Feeling 17 again: Quincy directs, Miles plays

looking at these sketches and going back and listening to the records.

"In the end, I had to basically re-orchestrate a lot of it, so what we played is not the actual orchestration that is on the record. I had to make some educated guesses to fill in the blanks, but I was just gratified that it was all sounding like Gil and giving this general impression of those charts."

Goldstein may have been proud to work on the project, but he promptly placed credit for its success on the shoulders of two others.

"[Miles] really nailed the stuff," he said. "It took him a little while to warm up to the music and slide back into it, and doing it like, really, nobody else can do. Especially the stuff like 'My Ship.'

It's just like . . . forget about it. Nobody can play that ballad like Miles.

"I also thought that Quincy was amazing," Goldstein added. "I just dig the fact that he can hang with Madonna and Michael Jackson and still be the total fan of this music. And, his love of this music filters into whatever he does. Really, he is the only person who could've pulled this thing together—the only one who could've encouraged Miles to do it and just have the persistence and vision to see it through. And, he really brought a lot of ideas to the thing. He went through the scores and really refined the stuff with a fine-toothed comb. I think as much as the guys were playing for Gil and Miles, they were playing for Quincy, too." —B.M.

the lines characterized by masterful restraint, uncanny use of space, and a kind of sly, behind-the-beat phrasing on ballads that once caused Gil Evans to call him "a sensational singer of songs."

Miles' skillful timing was especially apparent on the title cut from *Miles Ahead*, which also featured a flowing, boppish alto solo from Garrett. On "Blues For Pablo," Miles engaged in spirited open-horn exchanges with Roney, who, throughout the program, would glance over at his hero with the eyes of a rookie watching Babe Ruth.

The idea of having Roney shadow Miles came up spontaneously during the first day of rehearsals at Montreux. "Miles didn't show up and we needed somebody to play his part," said Goldstein. "At first, we were going to have [trombonist] Benny Bailey do it, but at the last minute we gave it to Wallace Roney, who was one of the trumpets in George Gruntz' band. So, Wallace was up there playing Miles' part when Miles finally walked in during 'Boplicity.' Wallace just kind of stayed up there and started playing unison lines and trading solos with Miles.

"It was a great experience for him, and I think Miles really dug playing with him. And, I don't think that anybody could've done it as good as Wallace did in terms of just having real courtesy and respect and still play his ass off. He had to walk a kind of fine line between being a brat and being totally respectful. And, I think he was both."

But onstage, others were playing their asses off too. Mike Richmond supplied a formidable bass presence, anchoring the pieces along with Grady Tate, whose brushwork on "My Ship" was sublime. Kenwood Dennard took over the drum chair on "Gone" from *Porgy & Bess* and kicked the band into high gear, inspiring some fiery eights between Miles, Roney, and Garrett.

Miles dug deep on "Summertime," another muted-trumpet vehicle for the maestro, buoyed by a cushion of oboes and alto flutes. Delmar Brown added an earthy edge

here with some lively, syncopated keyboard comping. Garrett responded with his finest solo of the evening, blowing more horn than he's ever had a chance to play in the context of Miles' electric band. Garrett also contributed some strong alto work on "Here Come De Honey Man," though Miles seemed indifferent to this serenely melodic piece, virtually laying out and relying on Roney to cover his parts.

The evening closed dramatically with two pieces from *Sketches Of Spain*. With glasses in place, Miles diligently read the charts

either Gil would refuse or Miles would refuse. So, I had long ago gotten over the thought that I could possibly ever hear that happen. Gil was always thinking about the future or what he was doing next. He didn't want to look back. Miles had the same attitude. And, after all, some of this paper hadn't been unfolded in 34 years.

"So, you can imagine, it must have been scary for [Miles], not that he would ever admit it. But he braved it out, he showed up, and the music was beautiful. All the elements were set into place, then Miles

Miles delivered the goods, blowing with the kind of confidence, soulful phrasing, and dramatic power few critics thought he still had in him.



down, navigating his way through "Pan Piper" (which, unfortunately, was marred by a sharp E string on Carlos Benavent's electric bass) and culminating beautifully with the flamenco-flavored "Solea."

The next day, a group gathered to watch the videotape of "L'Evenement" at Claude Nobs' chalet in the mountains. Members of the orchestra stood in awe of the aching tone, the vocal expression, the sheer power, and unpredictable choices that Miles made throughout the evening. If a videotape of this performance is ever made available, a lot of skeptics are going to have to eat their words. (Memo to Messrs. Wynton Marsalis and Stanley Crouch: Dinner is served.)

"It was really a struggle sometimes getting all of the diverse realities together for this," said Anita Evans. It just seemed unbelievable that it could happen. Every year for the past 25 years somebody would call up and ask Gil if they would get together and do it again. Depending on what year,

came in and did what he does . . . those magical tones and colors, his masterful sense of time and space. He just breathed his Miles Davisness at the right moment while the orchestra played the stuff. I'm still floating over how beautiful it sounded."

Perhaps, trumpet veteran Lew Soloff put it more succinctly: "That's one soulful mother**cker."

In character, Miles didn't speak after the show, but his feelings about the music were captured in more ways than through his playing. "To me, one of the nicest things of the whole experience happened on the last rehearsal," Goldstein said. "I kind of walked over to Miles to give him some changes I had written out, and he was just standing there listening to the band rehearse *Sketches*, and he said, 'Nobody will ever write like that again.' It was obvious that he loves Gil's writing, but it was just nice to hear him say it again." **DB**

Miles was the icing, but the 19-day celebration of international music provided plenty of other highlights, such as a stirring set by Charlie Haden's Liberation Music Orchestra on material from his latest, *Dream Keeper*; Joe Henderson's smokin' tenor in the context of Don Grolnick's Quintet; and George Clinton's monster dance party with Hiram Bullock, Delmar Brown, Kenwood Dennard, Lew Soloff, and Miles Evans sitting in with the P-Funk All-Stars.

In addition, B. B. King led a blues jam featuring guests Otis Rush, Big Time Sarah, Big Jay McNeely, LaVern Baker,

and on harmonica, Montreux Slim (a.k.a. Claude Nobs). Brazilian night featured Milton Nascimento and Dory Caymmi. Guitar hero Danny Gatton made his European debut. Quincy Jones hosted a *Back On The Block* jazz-meets-rap gala that included George Benson, the Count Basie Orchestra, Ray Charles, Herbie Hancock, Johnny Griffin, Clark Terry, and rappers Kool Moe Dee, Ice-T, and Big Daddy Kane.

New Orleans night brought the Wild Magnolias and the Dirty Dozen Brass Band. The festival culminated on a Sunday with a gospel summit featuring Andrae Crouch, the Mighty Clouds of Joy, and the

40-voice Atlanta Superchoir backing a sermon by the Rev. Jesse Jackson.

Though it started out in 1967 as a strictly jazz event, the Montreux Jazz Festival now has become a misnomer for this diverse presentation of music from around the world. In the spirit of *Down Beat*, Claude Nobs is truly presenting "Jazz, Blues & Beyond." —B.M.

Editor's Note: *Festival officials have announced that next year, it becomes the Montreux Jazz and World Music Festival to reflect the event's broader scope.*

From The University Of A&M

(Art & Miles, Of Course)

FREDDIE HUBBARD

By Geoffrey Himes

When a 20-year-old Freddie Hubbard moved from Indianapolis to New York in 1958, every young trumpeter was being compared to Miles Davis, who was then still working with John Coltrane in Miles' quintet. One of Hubbard's first New York gigs came on a Monday night at Birdland with Davis' drummer Philly Joe Jones.

"I had worked out this really sharp version of Miles' 'Two Bass Hit,'" Hubbard recalled with a chuckle. "I was feeling good, because it sounded just like Miles, and then I looked down and there was Miles sitting in the front row. I said, 'Oh shit!' I played something completely different from what I had planned, but he must have liked it, because he recommended me to Blue Note."

During the early '60s, Hubbard played with many of Davis' sidemen—on two Coltrane albums and with Jones, Herbie Hancock, and Wayne Shorter on Hubbard's own Blue Note albums. In those days, Hubbard played in Davis' modal style, tracing moody, melodic solos against a freely rendered swing. When Davis' mid-'60s quintet (Hancock, Shorter, Ron Carter, and Tony Williams) reunited for the *V.S.O.P.* tour in 1977, Hubbard took Davis' place in the trumpet chair.

So it's surprising to hear Hubbard these days and realize how little he resembles Davis. This past summer he toured with the "Jazz Explosion" package (Nancy Wilson, Joe Williams, Stanley Turrentine, and Jimmy Smith), which stopped at the Merriweather Post Pavilion in Maryland. Wearing a white, loose shirt over his compact, muscular body, Hubbard opened his set with "Bolivia," the uptempo title tune from his latest album



NANCY ANNE LEE

(see "Reviews" p. 36).

With his thick glasses propped on his square head, he pointed his trumpet at the mic and blew lines that were diamond-hard in tone and just as sharply phrased. That solid, aggressive tone and the Latin flavoring of the rhythm had little in common with Davis' wistful, understated playing and instead recalled Dizzy Gillespie. Then he picked up his flugelhorn and played a bluesy arrangement of "God Bless The Child" with a warm, buttery tone that sounded like neither Davis nor Gillespie.

"That's why I started playing the flugelhorn," Hubbard confessed. "I had heard Miles and Dizzy on so many records, and I didn't want to sound like either one of them. I figured if I could play the ballads on a flugelhorn, it would sound bigger than Miles' muted trumpet and softer than Dizzy's trumpet. That could be my forte, and it would give me an identity between them."

That hasn't stopped people from making

comparisons. When Hubbard made one of his frequent trips to Japan in 1989, producer Makoto Kimata approached the trumpeter about a recording project. "He wanted me to play these standards with a mute," Hubbard related. "He said, 'You'll sound just like Miles.' I said, 'Hell, no, I don't want to sound like Miles.'" Finally, Kimata made Hubbard a financial offer he couldn't refuse, and Hubbard recorded nine standards with his road band. The resulting album, *Topsy—Standard Book*, has now been released in the U.S. on Alfa/Compose.

"To me, it was just a joke," Hubbard said of the album. "Someone wanted me to do it, so I did it. But sometimes when you're just joking around, the music comes out free and easy. And that makes it easier for people to enjoy. I think that's what happened with *Topsy*."

Hubbard is much prouder of his newest album, *Bolivia*, on MusicMasters. In addition to the versions of Cedar Walton's title tune and Billie Holiday's "God Bless The Child," the album contains four new Hubbard compositions, all exploring his revitalized interest in Latin jazz. The inspiration for the album came from a tour of Central America that Hubbard did for the U.S. State Department in 1989.

"Going down there is like going back in time," Hubbard said. "You can go up on a hill where they have a big cross and look down over all this green rainforest, and it looks like the medieval days. You can smell the jungle and hear them all beating on these big conga drums. It seems like a paradise until you see the living conditions—no windows, dirt floors, doors open all the time. But I heard some rhythms that really knocked me out—a real Latin, jungle kind of music that you never hear up here. It's not like the Puerto Rican music you hear in New York; it's freer and not so arranged."

Hubbard has long been interested in Latin jazz. He loved Gillespie's Afro-Cuban projects, and when Hubbard first moved to the Bronx in 1958, he used to hang out at the 845 Club on 163rd Street, where Willie Barreto led Latin jam sessions. Hubbard even played trumpet with Pucho & the Latin Soul Brothers for a while.

"I like the rhythms of salsa," he acknowledged, "but not as strictly as they play it. I want to hear that rhythm arranged as it would be for 4/4—with stops and more intervallic playing. I like the way Art Blakey would play a Latin feel on the rim behind Horace Silver. I think Paquito D'Rivera is writing some of the most modern Latin music I've ever heard. He has intricate changes and different voices happening to that Latin beat. That's what I want to hear."

Bolivia allowed Hubbard to enjoy two reunions: with drummer Billy Higgins and

pianist Cedar Walton. Higgins first played with Hubbard on an album so influential it became the name of a genre: Ornette Coleman's *Free Jazz*. "I didn't even know what to do at that session," Hubbard admitted. "I'd been playing straight melodic stuff, and I said, 'What do I play?' and Ornette said, 'Play what you feel.' So I just jumped off the edge." Hubbard took that experience and applied it to his own Blue Note albums, most notably the 1964 *Breaking Point*, which has just been reissued on CD. It was Hubbard's first album with his own band, and it walks a fine line between his free-jazz experiences with Coleman and Coltrane and his hard-bop experiences with Blakey.

Hubbard and Walton first collaborated in Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers in the early

*"Sometimes when you're just
joking around, the music
comes out free and easy.
And that makes it easier
for people to enjoy."*



'60s. Like alumni of a very exclusive school, they share a bond that outsiders can't touch. "It was frightening sometimes to play with Art," Hubbard admitted. "Sometimes he'd hit so hard that the whole bandstand would start to vibrate as if it were about to lift off—and you'd have to play through all that. He had a knack for making a small combo sound like a big band. A lot of younger drummers never played with a big band, so they don't know how to drive a big sound. After playing with Art, any other drummer sounds like a baby."

Hubbard and Walton played the very gospelish arrangement of "God Bless The Child" on the new album as an unaccompanied duet. "Cedar has that Texas, block-chord, churchy feel that fits just right," Hubbard said. "As soon as he played those chords for 'God Bless The Child,' he reminded me of my mother making me play my trumpet in church. I was just 11 or 12 and she made me stand up by myself and play 'Nearer My God To Thee' and 'A Closer Walk With Thee.'

"There's a certain kind of reverence you get in a Baptist church," he added, "and that spirit carries over into all black music. The blues and funk are a combination of the church and the street, but jazz is a combination of the church and the street and the college. And for me, Miles and Art were the college I attended." **DB**



MITCHELL SEIDEL

EQUIPMENT

"I use a Calicchio trumpet. I met the old man, Dominic Calicchio, at home in Los Angeles just after he'd come over from Milan. Those Italians have a way of tempering the metal that makes for a great trumpet. He let me come into his shop and blow all day. He'd let me try out all combinations of bells and mouthpieces. He'd even let me take a horn out on the road and try it out, and if I didn't like it, I could bring it back. How could I resist?"

"He made me a mouthpiece modeled after a Bach 6-medium. I use a Getzen flugelhorn that I found in a pawn shop in New Orleans four years ago. I used to use a pickup, but one night I got a shock when I touched the mic and there was some saliva on my lip. I got a shock that froze my lip for two days, and I said, 'Get rid of this thing.' Now I just blow straight into the microphone. When I'm at home composing, I use a little Fisher spinet piano."

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader

BOLIVIA—MusicMasters 5063-2-C
TOPSY—STANDARD BOOK—Alta/Compose 7101
BREAKING POINT—Blue Note 84172
OUTPOST—Enja 3095
DOUBLETAKE—Blue Note 46294 (w/ Woody Shaw)
LIFE-FLIGHT—Blue Note 46898
TIMES 'R' CHANGIN'—Blue Note 90905
THE BEST OF FREDDIE HUBBARD—Blue Note 93202
CLASSICS—Fantasy 9635
KEYSTONE BOP—Fantasy 9615
LIVE AT THE NORTH SEA JAZZ FESTIVAL—Pablo 2620-113
BACKLASH—Atlantic 90466
HERE TO STAY—Blue Note 84135
HUB-TONES—Blue Note 84115
OPEN SESAME—Blue Note 84040
HUB CAP—Blue Note 84073

with various others

DROPPIN' THINGS—Verve 843 991 (w/ Betty Carter)
FOUR X FOUR—Milestone 55007 (w/ McCoy Tyner)
V.S.O.P.—Columbia 34688 (w/ Wayne Shorter & Herbie Hancock)
THE QUINTET—Columbia C2 34976 (w/ Wayne Shorter & Herbie Hancock)
SING ME A SONG OF SONGMY—Atlantic 1576 (w/ Ilhan Mimaroglu)
ASCENSION—Impulse A 95 (w/ John Coltrane)
CARAVAN—Fantasy/OJC 038 (w/ Art Blakey)
OUT TO LUNCH—Blue Note 84163 (w/ Eric Dolphy)
OLÉ—Atlantic 1373 (w/ John Coltrane)
FREE JAZZ—Atlantic 1364 (w/ Ornette Coleman)
TAKIN' OFF—Blue Note 84109 (w/ Herbie Hancock)

Impersonating A Jazz Drummer

CHARLIE WATTS

By Suzanne McElfresh



END FARBBER

Sipping tea in his suite in a fancy midtown-Manhattan hotel, Charlie Watts looks more English country gentleman than member of that popular rock combo known as the Rolling Stones. With his short-cropped hair, wonderfully chiseled features, and piercing gaze, the 50-year-old drummer could even pass for a veteran jazz master. In fact, he'd done something approximating that the previous night at the Blue Note with his bebop quintet.

"Yesterday, I was Kenny Clarke. Nobody else thought I was, but what I was doing was a direct copy of my two favorite drummers, Kenny Clarke and Max Roach," said Watts, adding modestly, "though they would certainly do better than I did."

The evening marked the release of *From One Charlie* (Continuum 19104), a tribute to Charlie Parker, featuring seven songs and a "kids' book," as Watts calls it, *Ode To A High-Flying Bird*. A simple, nonjudgmental tale of Bird's life, musical genius, and untimely death, the book was written and illustrated by Watts in 1960, five years after Parker had gone. Watts, you see, has loved bebop—and, naturally, Bird—since the age of 13, when he and his 12-year-old bass-playing neighbor David started jamming together.

"David's favorite bass player was Jimmy Blanton, Ellington's bassist [from 1939-'41], who was the first bass player to play actual melodies as lines; he was fantastic," said Watts. Chico Hamilton was the first drummer Watts ever heard, on the first record he ever bought, Gerry Mulligan's *Walking Shoes*. "That's what made me want to play drums," prompting him to start even before

he had a set. "I had a banjo and I took the neck off and played [the banjo head] with wire brushes."

And so, his success as a rock drummer notwithstanding, Watts has harbored a deep love for—and a thorough understanding of—jazz, nurtured with a large record collection that includes all of Parker's records. "At one time, there were only about 30. Now, since the mid-'80s, there are thousands." Having money, fame, respect, and time at his disposal ("We do two-year periods now. Blocks, they call it. They wheel us out every so often."), Watts first indulged his love in 1985, when he put together a 36-piece big band, featuring three drummers, to record and tour (see DB, Feb. '87).

His second excursion into the jazz realm came about when a friend persuaded Watts to reprint *Ode*, originally published in 1964. Watts decided to record music to go with it and enlisted alto saxophonist and composer Peter King, who'd been a member of the big band. The result is five quintessential bebop compositions—you'd swear you've heard them before—and two Parker originals, "Bluebird" and "Relaxin' At Camarillo," performed by a classic bebop lineup, with King, 19-year-old trumpeter Gerard Presencer, pianist Brian Lemon, bassist David Green (the next-door neighbor), and Watts.

At the Blue Note, the songs were presented during each of two 45-minute sets as a sort of theater piece, with narrator Bernard Fowler prefacing each composition with a few pages of text. The package—performed in New York, London, and Tokyo—made for a touching, humorous, well-

paced tribute.

Since the '50s, accomplished jazz musicians have crossed over genre lines to play r&b, funk, rock, and pop (e.g., Cannonball Adderly, Horace Silver, Miles Davis, Donald Byrd, Eddie Harris, George Benson), but the reverse is ever more rare; few cases come to mind, aside from Sting, guitarist Jerry Garcia's collaboration with Ornette Coleman, and the African-jazz forays of drummer Ginger Baker.

Still, Watts sees no need to separate music into styles. "The job's the same, same function. I don't listen to things as jazz and rhythm & blues and all that. I've never done that." He plays the same drums for any gig, a '58 Gretsch set, with Zildjian cymbals and Ludwig Speed King pedals, admitting that "I'm not a great equipment man, never have been. I don't have a lot of drums and they're all really old. Rather like my suits."

What Watts has listened to over the years is virtually all the great jazz drummers, who have taught him that "you don't learn a music like jazz by talking about it. You have to play it. It all has to do with the way you live, the personality. Doing a single-stroke roll is a physical exercise. But Tony Williams doing it is a spiritual thing. To sit in front of Art Blakey doing a press roll would take your head off."

These lessons Watts has absorbed well, applying them even on his rock & roll gigs. "When I play, I might try to do something like Elvin Jones—a huge, great swirling thing. I've done it on Stones records. You'd never recognize it, but I've sat there and imagined I was him. That's Elvin, coming through me." **DB**

JAZZ SELLS

By John McDonough

A few years ago a teenage girl spotted Miles Davis in a California airport concourse, ran up to him, and asked for an autograph. Davis glared at the perky, white Valley Girl with a look of skepticism. "Hey," he rasped, "you don't know who I am."

"Sure I do," she chirped back. "You're the man in the Honda motorcycle commercial."

If Davis doubted the power of advertising, the incident enlightened him. "Isn't that a bitch," he later told producer Tommy Li-Puma. "Fifty years in music and I'm known by a Honda commercial."

It should not have surprised him. Davis is a cultural symbol whose meaning, if not music, extends far beyond the audience that buys his records. You don't have to know *Kind Of Blue* or *Bitches Brew* to know that Miles is the coolest man alive. That's why the Davis persona became coin of the realm in the commerce of advertising.

The higher one climbs in advertising's evolutionary chain, from 900 numbers at the bottom to high fashion at the top, the more one encounters the use of symbols to communicate subtle and subjective product attributes such as personality, status, style, texture, mood, and emotional temperature. To do that, symbols must have meaning, common at least to the people the advertiser is trying to reach. The bigger the market, the more shared the symbols must be across the culture.

If one gauges the impact of contemporary jazz by its use as a major advertising symbol over the years, the conclusion must be that jazz occupies, at best, a narrow niche in American life. The major exception was Brown & Williamson, whose Kool cigarettes became synonymous with jazz in the '70s. Advertisers typically embraced jazz only in terms of its most threadbare and clichéd images—musicians in derbies, New Orleans nights, and dixieland; or its transcendent celebrities such as Louis Armstrong (Schaffer Beer), Benny Goodman (Pinch, American Express), Ella Fitzgerald and Count Basie (Memorex)—all used more for their stature as beloved icons than their ties to jazz.

That may be changing. If bebop was soiled by its drug image and free jazz was too



Maceo Parker for The Gap

ALBERT WATSON FOR THE GAP

cultish and politicized for advertisers more preoccupied with the mass appeal of rock, the new classicism seems to have broken the hex on jazz as an upper-middle-class pastime for the first time since the swing era. The yuppie look, seasoned with a touch of eccentricity, has replaced the outlaw image as the favored jazz profile. Beginning with CBS's success with Wynton Marsalis, other major record labels have developed a coterie of well-tailored, articulate, and bright young stars as poised, mediagenic, and fashion-conscious as any presidential candidate: Marcus Roberts, Harry Connick Jr., Terence Blanchard, et al. A well-crafted image that can sell music successfully becomes like gold. It's negotiable anywhere.

The result is corporations are backing jazz events again, such as 3M's sponsorship of the Minnesota Jazz Party. And jazz-club imagery from movies like *Bird* and *Mo' Better Blues* is working its way, in sanitized, stylized form, into major advertising campaigns. A case in point is the campaign for Bloomingdale's Swing Shift clothing line running in full-page *New York Times* ads. The copy is embarrassingly stereotypical. But it's the imagery that counts: Roy Hargrove in accommodating pants and shirt and Christopher Hollyday in his '40s suit, both with their horns, flanking a pretty white model in a short flouncy dress. What is it that jazz now offers one of the country's most powerful fashion arbiters?

"We respond to cutting-edge trends at a kind of gut level," said John Jay, creative director at Bloomingdale's. "In Manhattan these downtown swing dances happen to be very hot items nowadays among our customers. Combine that with what seems to be a new generation of very young, talented musicians, and you have our inspiration."

If advertisers are more concerned with jazz artists as style beacons than musicians, it's because style can be appreciated in ways that music cannot. For two years The Gap has run a campaign called "Individuals of Style," a series of black & white inserts in which jazz musicians have mingled with artists, architects, and actors. What Dizzy Gillespie, Miles Davis, Maceo Parker, and Courtney Pine have in common with Chris Isaak, Jody Watley, and Cathy Dennis is not jazz but personal flair, a signature of presence. "Our campaign is about interesting people that have style," said Gap spokesman Richard Chrisman. "It's not about jazz. I don't know if jazz has any new importance as a cultural force. I do know that some people who happen to be jazz musicians are very compelling individuals."

A decade ago jazz was perceived as something almost historic, played by older performers who were universally known or younger ones hardly known at all. Today, through serious marketing, broad exposure, not to mention the cover of *Time*, a new generation of jazz artists has acquired a reformed public profile of discipline, accomplishment, and youth. And clean-cut youth at that. Imagine jazz as clean-cut! Jazz in the mass market has become everything



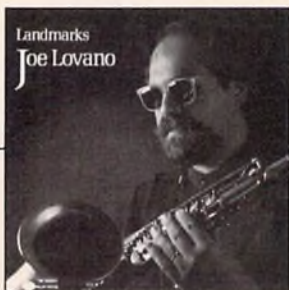
Hargrove and Hollyday for Bloomies

that rock is not. It has acquired a maturity of character while still under 30. This is an imagery that transcends music and lures advertisers.

Yet, the man perhaps most responsible for this, Wynton Marsalis, has chosen not to participate. Though offered a fortune in prestigious ad opportunities, according to a spokesperson, he has declined to invest his prestige in product advertising. He prefers to stick to the music. Ironically, the longer he holds out, the more value he will acquire as a symbol. **DB**

Key

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



Joe Lovano

LANDMARKS—Blue Note CDP 7 96108 2: *THE OWL AND THE FOX; PRIMAL DANCE; EMPEROR JONES; LANDMARKS ALL ALONG THE WAY; STREET TALK; HERE AND NOW; I LOVE MUSIC; WHERE HAWKS FLY; THANKSGIVING; DIG THIS.* (55:18)

Personnel: Lovano, tenor sax; John Abercrombie, guitar (cuts 2,4,6-8); Ken Werner, piano; Marc Johnson, bass; Bill Stewart, drums.

★★★★½

Salvatore Bonafede

ACTOR-ACTRESS—Ken 004: *MEL LEWIS; PAUL MOTIAN; ACTOR-ACTRESS; G-LOVE; SOMETIMES NOTES ARE LESS THAN 12; U.R.I.; JOE LOVANO; PAUL BLEY; VERVE; MEL LEWIS (ALTERNATE TAKE).* (62:13)

Personnel: Bonafede, piano; Joe Lovano, tenor sax; Cameron Brown, bass; Adam Nussbaum, drums.

★★★

To say that Joe Lovano may be the most exciting tenor player on the scene at this moment may, arguably, be accurate, but it's also misleading. Lovano is exciting by virtue of his willingness to savor a note, to split tones, and explore an introspective road less-taken. In short, at a time when young lions are flaunting wares at a furious rate, Lovano has come on like a whiz kid who's no kid at all: he's a fully matured and matriculated musician. Free yet directed, loose yet well-grounded, Lovano is a signature stylist who invariably speaks wisely when he picks up a horn.

When, on this first for Blue Note, Lovano plays around the deceptively simple melody line to Emil Boyd's ballad, "I Love Music," you feel the title's full sentimental meaning. The material and instrumentation are variegated, like many a debut by a widely-versed musician eager to show his diversity. Here, the mix is magical. *Landmarks* veers off into various groupings and entertains tunes both luscious ("Landmarks Along The Way") and mischievous ("Dig This"). A no-bullshit signpost of jazz's continued aesthetic vitality, *Landmarks*

is a marvel. And if tones could kill...

One of many recent releases featuring Lovano's sound is *Actor-Actress*, the debut by the young Italian emigré pianist Salvatore Bonafede. Bonafede's playing and writing gifts are impressive, but have yet to settle down into something resembling cohesiveness. Now tough and angular, now blue and sentimental, Bonafede is avidly hunting for a direction. He's a prodigious protégé of American jazz. In addition to eponymously titled, in-character tributes to "Mel Lewis," "Paul Motian," and "Paul Bley," Bonafede also penned "Joe Lovano," a melancholy ballad which gives rise to one of Lovano's effortless emotive flights. (reviewed on CD)

—Josef Woodard



Steve Coleman/ Five Elements

BLACK SCIENCE—RCA/Novus 3119-2-N: *THE X FORMAT (STANDARD DEVIATION); TWISTER; TURBULENCE; BEYOND ALL WE KNOW; A VIAL OF CALM; BLACK PHONEMICS; GHOST TOWN; MAGNETO; CROSS-FADE; BLACK PHONEMICS (REPRISE).* (51:05)

Personnel: Coleman, alto sax; James Weidman, piano; David Gilmore, guitar, guitar synthesizer; Reggie Washington, electric bass; Marvin "Smitty" Smith, drums, percussion; Cassandra Wilson, vocals (cuts 1,4,5); Dave Holland, acoustic bass (2,4,5); Najma Akhtar, vocals (7); Dave Mills, voice (7).

★★★★

Greg Osby

MAN-TALK FOR MODERNS VOL. X—Blue Note CDP 7 95414 2: *CAD'LACK BACK; FOR HERE TO GO; MAN-TALK; LIKE SO . . . ; ON A MISSION; LO-FI; BALAKA; BLACK MOON (FOR GERI); CAROLLA; 2TH (TWOOTH).* (54:18)

Personnel: Osby, alto, soprano saxes, keyboards; Edward Simon, Michael Cain, keyboards; Chan Johnson, guitar; David Gilmore, guitar, guitar synthesizer; Lonnie Plaxico, James Genus, bass; Billy Kilson, drums; Steve Moss, percussion; Steve Coleman, alto sax (3,7); Gary Thomas, tenor sax, flute (5,8); Hochmad Ali Akkbar, vocals (7).

★★★

Experiments aren't enough to keep a laboratory running. Even the M-Base think-tank has to deliver results eventually. These two M-Base albums are finished products, full of refinement and technique, ready for the marketplace.

Black Science may be Steve Coleman's manifesto, a relentless, no-nonsense demonstration of his compositional strategies. *Black Science* is more successful than prior Five Elements projects because it's less ambitious. Coleman minimizes his references to r&b, rap,

and dance influences, opting for a streamlined, mostly instrumental approach. Titles like "Twister" and "Turbulence" could describe any of these compositions, which generate intensity through swirling melodies and aggressive percussion. Throughout, Five Elements runs a clinic on how to play in sync through complex melodies in weird, unsafe time signatures. Coleman's playing remains unpredictable, full of twists, hairpin turns, and eccentric beats. "Smitty" Smith's driving rhythms and accents give the music its power and its strange timing—he and Coleman could (and should) work as a duo.

Greg Osby heads for the middle of the road with *Man-Talk For Moderns Vol. X*. His wants a "slam-funk" sound derived from basement jams and dance tunes. That down-and-dirty spirit comes through best on the title track and "On A Mission," and you want to hear more of it. It's no coincidence that the strongest tracks team Osby with Coleman or Gary Thomas—Osby plays up to a challenge. Too often, Osby's production dresses up formulaic jazz-funk vamps with digital "ear candy" production. He explores the melodic potentials of the grooves with a smooth, polished tone and intricate phrasing (particularly on the ballad, "Like So . . ."), but some of these rhythm tracks just don't merit his attention. Listening to Osby on *Man-Talk* is like driving a Porsche at 55 miles per hour. (reviewed on CD)

—Jon Andrews



Freddie Hubbard

BOLIVIA—MusicMasters 5063-2-C: *HOMEGROWN; BOLIVIA; GOD BLESS THE CHILD; DEAR JOHN; MANAGUA; THIRD WORLD.* (48:10)

Personnel: Hubbard, trumpet, flugelhorn; Cedar Walton, piano; Billy Higgins, drums; David Williams, bass; Vincent Herring, alto sax (cuts 2,4,6), soprano sax (6); Ralph Moore, tenor sax (2,4-6), soprano sax (1); Giovanni Hidalgo, congas (1).

★★★★

TOPSY-STANDARD BOOK—Alfa/Compose 7101-2: *TOPSY; CARAVAN; AS TIME GOES BY; CHEROKEE; BLACK ORPHEUS; LOVE ME OR LEAVE ME; ALL OF YOU; GOLDEN EARRINGS; LAMENT.* (63:22)

Personnel: Hubbard, trumpet; Benny Green, piano; Rufus Reid, bass; Carl Allen, drums; Kenny Garrett, alto sax (2,4,6).

★★★½

Kirk Lightsey Trio & Freddie Hubbard

TEMPTATION—Timeless CD SJP 257: *GIBRALTAR*; *EVIDENCE*; *SOCIETY RED*; *TEMPTATION*; *LOVE IS A MANY-SPLENDORED THING*; *BRIGETTE*. (51:18)

Personnel: Hubbard, trumpet; Lightsey, piano; Santi Debriano, bass; Eddie Gladden, drums; Jerry Gonzalez, percussion (1).

★★★★★

Bolivia finds Freddie in a Latin mood and in the company of fellow Blakey alumnus Cedar Walton. From the opener, a salsa-flavored "Homegrown," the trumpeter shows that his chops are up. As the program progresses, following a tender piano-flugelhorn duet on "God Bless The Child," Freddie gets more daring. The energy level jumps a couple of notches on "Dear John," his recently-penned ode to John Coltrane based on "Giant Steps." Vincent Herring and Ralph Moore turn in exceptional solos here and Freddie meets their challenge with some bold flurries of his own. But he really kicks into high gear on "Managua," a 10-minute romp with a floating head over a churning groove. Throughout the session, Freddie is spurred on by Walton's colorful block chording and by the youthful exuberance of Herring and Moore.

Topsy-Standard Book, a swinging, if conservative, program for the Japanese Alfa label, is a curiosity in that Hubbard plays only muted trumpet throughout. It's a more subdued affair than one would expect from the trumpeter, whose tone has always been unashamedly brassy. Pianist Benny Green enhances that

relaxed quality with luscious comping on "Topsy," "As Time Goes By," and J.J. Johnson's "Lament." The band takes "Cherokee" at an impossibly fast tempo, with Freddie and Kenny Garrett tossing off dazzling lines at a break-neck pace. And Freddie dips heavily into an early '60s Miles bag on Cole Porter's "All Of You." Drummer Carl Allen and bassist Rufus Reid kick things along in swinging fashion, but Freddie plays this one a little too somber and close to the vest for my tastes.

Temptation, on the other hand, bristles with energy. Recorded in Holland in 1987, this phenomenal session is looser and far more daring, and Freddie responds to that openness with some of his finest, freest blowing heard in decades. His playing on "Gibraltar" is breathtaking, full of signature lip trills, bold upper-register leaps, eccentric growls and smears. Kirk Lightsey's off-kilter comping and Jerry Gonzalez' conga groove really bring out the fire in Freddie. On a swinging version of Monk's "Evidence," Freddie flaunts dexterity and daring on muted trumpet, exploding off his exchanges of eights with drummer Eddie Gladden. On "Society Red," with earthy Horace Silver-type comping by Lightsey, Freddie screams the blues. And with muted trumpet, backed by Lightsey's impressionistic piano textures, he turns "Temptation" into a kind of jazzy "Bolero." On an uptempo rendition of "Love Is A Many-Splendored Thing," it's like he's just itching to get out of the head and burn, which he does with the same aggressive

attack and confidence-bordering-on-arrogance he displayed during his '60s Blue Note period. (reviewed on CD) —Bill Milkowski



Nancy King & Glen Moore

IMPENDING BLOOM—Justice JR 0801-2: *MOUNTAIN GREENERY*; *IMPENDING BLOOM*; *CHEROKEE*; *USELESS LANDSCAPE*; *STOMPIN' AT THE SAVOY*; *BY MYSELF*; *WHITE DUCK*; *MAN IN THE OVEN*; *POINCIANA*; *SECRET LOVE*; *HEARTBREAK HOTEL*; *SEMI-PROCRASTINATION*; *TENNESSEE WALTZ*; *GOIN' HOME*; *MAN IN THE OVEN (DANCE MIX)*. (57:27)

Personnel: King, vocals; Moore, acoustic bass, piano; Lawrence Williams, drums (cuts 5, 7, 9, 13, 15); Jerry Hahn, guitar (5, 13, 15); Bob Thomas, violin (5, 13, 15).

★★★

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DOWNBEAT ★★★★★

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I usually think of Glen Moore as a world-music explorer with Oregon or as a free improviser. I never expected to hear him play "Heartbreak Hotel." Moore's playing is wonderful throughout the eccentric *Impending Bloom*—he has a lean, no-frills approach, playing only what needs to be played, but with a deep, woofertesting resonance. Nancy King scats, bops, whinnies, embellishes, and surrounds Moore's sometimes spare bass lines. She seems most comfortable with ballads, particularly "Tennessee Waltz" and Jobim's "Useless Landscape," which recall Sheila Jordan's duets with bassist

Arild Andersen. During cute, offbeat stuff like "Impending Bloom," you may recall Tuck & Patti, for better or worse.

King & Moore mostly explore a trad-and-true book of tunes through a duo setting, reinventing chestnuts like "Mountain Greenery." King, who claims Ella Fitzgerald as a major influence, also has to contend with Samantha Moore's quirky, obscure lyrics. How would Ella sing "There's a man in the oven, lyin' in a casserole"? This may be the only jazz lyric inspired by Peter Greenaway's film *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife And Her Lover*. Unfortu-

nately, King's hyperactive, uptempo tunes ("Stompin' At The Savoy") threaten to overwhelm her partner. Use of the full band, particularly guitarist Jerry Hahn, would have added balance and variety.

Some of the kookiness can sound a little forced, but *Impending Bloom* conveys the intimacy of these duets in an informal setting with appropriately stripped-down production values. (reviewed on CD) —Jon Andrews

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Jackie McLean

BITES OF PASSAGE—Triloka 188-2: *A CALLING; MY LADY (PORTRAIT OF A DOLL); DESTINY'S ROMANCE; CYCLICAL; MORNING PRAYER; BITES OF PASSAGE; NAIMA'S TONE POEM; FIRESIGN; YESTERDAY'S BLUES TOMORROW; RENDEZVOUS IN CONGO SQUARE.* (58:51)

Personnel: McLean, alto sax; Rene McLean, soprano, alto, tenor saxes; Hotep Idris Galeta, piano; Nat Reeves, bass; Carl Allen, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

Antonio Hart

FOR THE FIRST TIME—RCA Novus 3120: *MAJORITY; BIG H.M.; EMBRACEABLE YOU; DEL SASSER; SELF EVALUATION; K.Y.H.; BEWITCHED; WHERE OR WHEN; FOR THE FIRST TIME; I'VE NEVER BEEN IN LOVE BEFORE; STRAIGHT AHEAD.* (62:54)

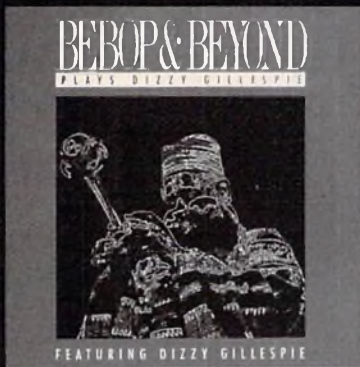
Personnel: Hart, alto sax; Roy Hargrove (cut 2), Thomas Williams (4, 5, 9), trumpet; Billy Pierce, tenor sax, (1, 6); Mulgrew Miller, piano; Christian McBride, bass; Louis Nash, drums.

★ ★ ★

It's too simplistic just to cast 23-year-old Antonio Hart as a young lion emerging from the long shadows cast by giants like Jackie McLean. There's a wild card here—Rene McLean. An even more formidable presence than on last year's *Dynasty* (see "Reviews" Oct. '90), Rene contributes six engaging pieces to *Rites of Passage*, and ups the ante on his father with every solo. Rene's fresh and fiery—so why don't we hear more from him? He's of an ignored generation that's too young to be a legend, and too old to land a deal with a major U.S. label.

Jackie Mac is exultant throughout a program packed with well-hooked cookers tailored to his inimitable alto. Highlighted by his trademark hard-edged tone, his solos reflect an ongoing refinement of his classic modal-influenced bop and blues vocabulary. His writing remains taut, as well—"A Calling" is a windsprint of an opener, and "My Lady" is a ballad whose mood shifts with each sculpted phrase. The McLeans are continually spurred on by the two-fisted piano of Hotep Idris Galeta; the

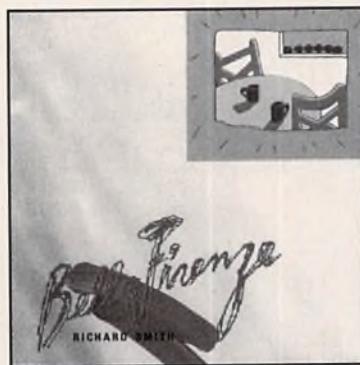
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fat, anchoring bass of Nat Reeves; and the explosive cross-rhythms of Carl Allen. Their propulsive, sometimes riveting work is a significant factor in the program's success.

Hart's debut as a leader is marked by an ingratiating modesty. He's got the up-tempo blowing vehicles down well enough; it's the ballads that are particularly interesting, as they reveal an unfolding effort to pare his solos with a Hodgesian sense of line and honeyed tone. Unlike most of his contemporaries, Hart conveys the vulnerability of being an improviser and a romantic. He's also a promising composer—"Majority" is an insightful reworking of Gigi Gryce's "Minority," and "Big H.M." is a bluesy portrait of pianist Harold Mabern.

For The First Time also has an adequate sprinkling of guest artists. Billy Pierce's brawny tenor and Roy Hargrove and Tom Williams' bright trumpets sustain the program's pace. Still, it's Hart and the forthright rhythm section of Mulgrew Miller, Christian McBride, and Louis Nash who carry the load. (reviewed on CD)

—Bill Shoemaker



Taj Mahal

LIKE NEVER BEFORE—Private Music 2081-2-P: *DON'T CALL US; RIVER OF LOVE; SCATTERED; EV'RY WIND (IN THE RIVER); BLUES WITH A FEELING; SQUAT THAT RABBIT; TAKE ALL THE TIME YOU NEED; LOVE UP; CAKEWALK INTO TOWN; BIG LEGGED MAMMAS ARE BACK IN STYLE; TAKE A GIANT STEP.* (47:20)

Personnel: Mahal, guitars, harmonica, piano, banjo, vocals; Andy Kravitz, drums, percussion (cuts 1-4, 6-9); Hiram Bullock (2, 9), Mike Tyler (6), Jerry Williams (7), Paul Barrere (8), guitars; Eric Bazilian (1, 3, 4, 7), lap steel guitar, guitars, mandolin; David Lindley (3, 8), Sonny Rhodes (5, 10), lap steel guitar; Doug Grisky (1-4, 7, 8), Tony Jones (10), bass; Rob Hyman, organ, accordion (1, 3, 7, 9); Jerry Cohen, organ (2, 7, 8); Dr. John, piano (4, 9); Mark Goodman, electric piano, synthesizers, organ (1, 7); Mark Jordan, piano, organ, synthesizers (3, 4); Jim Salamone, synthesizers (4, 8); Bill Summers (1-3, 11), David Johnson (4), percussion; Phil Nicolo, cymbals (6); Myric Guillory, rubboards (10); Jay Davidson, baritone and tenor saxes (2, 6, 8); Ron Kerber, alto sax (2, 8); Rudy Costa, curved soprano sax (3); Jeff Lego (2, 8), Art Baron (9), trombone; Gary McKeen (2, 8), Ed Kalney (2, 8), trumpet; Howard Johnson, tuba, cornet, baritone sax (9); Claire Daly, tenor sax (9); Haywood Henry (9), Daryl Hall, John Oates, the Pointer Sisters, and others, background vocals.

★ ★ ★ ½

Taj Mahal's latest album gets off to a disappointing start. The only thing that escapes a commercial veneer in the first three songs is his gravelly voice. But, just when it appears the

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folsky bluesman has recorded himself into a mainstream pop corner, Taj lets loose with a spontaneous run of African-sounding scat toward the end of the reggae-tinged "Scattered." From there to the final number—the gently soulful but only mildly successful remake of "Take A Giant Step," the Goffin-King tune he made a hit in 1969—Mahal's rootsy grittiness takes command.

Mahal catches a bluesy groove with the funky "Ev'ry Wind (In The River)," thanks to Dr. John's brisk piano lines, Andy Kravitz's fluttering rhythms, and his own radiant harmonica work, and then gives a great gulbucket blues reading to Walter Jacobs' "Blues With A Feeling," supported only by his syrupy slow piano tinklings and Sonny Rhodes' steel lap-guitar flourishes. And it gets even better with the clipping "Squat That Rabbit" (abetted by DJ Jazzy Jeff's turntable scratching and Jammin' Jay Davidson's spirited tenor sax phrasings) and an exuberant version of John Martyn's "Love Up," where David Lindley breezes through slide riffs and the Pointers lift up ecstatic, gospel-flavored backup vocals. But the best comes with the spiciness "Cakewalk Into Town," given the New Orleans parade band treatment (horn arrangements courtesy of that preeminent tuba pumper Howard Johnson), and the rollicking "Big Legged Mommas Are Back In Style" (a longtime crowd favorite at live Taj shows), where Mahal hammers the keyboards and growls out raspy vocals.

In spite of the slow start, this is an impressive, well-worth-the-wait comeback effort. (reviewed on CD)

—Dan Ouellette

Groove Prototypes

by Jack Sohmer

One happy development noted in today's college bands is the gradual turning away from the various forms of fusion, and, in its stead, we find a healthy return to the acoustic sound and swing of the better big bands of the '50s and '60s. **The Oberlin Jazz Ensemble** (OJE-0001; 53:47: ★★★) offers a good prototype of what follows, since its book contains a balanced assortment of mainstream arrangements, such as Quincy Jones' "Straight No Chaser" and Frank Foster's "In A Mellowtone," as well as original arrangements by director Wendell Logan and others. Trombonist Josh Hauser, who favors Al Grey, is one of the more commendable soloists. As is also true of the other bands, precision and polish, especially in ensemble playing, are unvarying attributes throughout.

The Final Set, by the **CSU Northridge Jazz Band** (CSUN-12-90; 61:48: ★★★), is virtually indistinguishable in style and performance from the other entries, and the bop-inflected Basie *lingua franca* that prevails is much to the apparent comfort and joy of saxmen Jerry Moore, Mike Bagasao, and Chris Pearson. Altoman Miles Osland is the director of the "DB"-winning **University Of Kentucky Jazz Ensemble**, and it is their *Cruisin'* (Mark MCD-834; 56:45: ★★★) that comes closest to characterizing the best of

today's college band output. Still favoring the latter-day Basie approach, this unit is notable for its superb trombone section and well-drilled sax team. Osland and trombonist David Henderson are the more impressive soloists.

Rich Matteson's **University Of North Florida Jazz Ensemble** (see "News" June '91) asks us the musical question, *Have You Heard?* (Walrus CDWR-4501; 64:24: ★★★), to which we must respond with a resounding "Yes, many times." This band also hews to the generic style, but still manages to flesh out its

book with some imaginative writing, such as Doug Matthews' chart on "Beautiful Love." But reminiscent of the worst excesses of the '70s, **Northcoast: The University Of Michigan Jazz Ensemble's** *First Flight* (Mark MCD-643; 47:36: ★★) offers little more than uninspired funk fusion retread characterized by Fergusonian brass, raspy tenors, and even electric piano and bass. What is all the more discouraging is the band's dispirited, bloodless reading of Ellington's classic "Cotton Tail," which, in sum, is more of an insult than a sign

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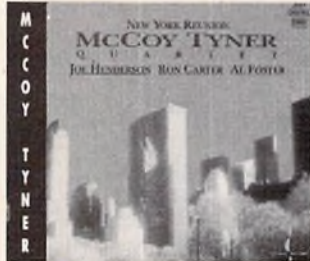
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of respect. The **University Of North Texas' One O'Clock Lab Band's Lab 89** (North Texas Jazz LA 8901-NS; 46:33: ★★★) demonstrates a bit more originality within the genre, even to the point of offering some genuinely classy writing, i.e., Mike Bogles' "Got A Match?," Rob Smith's "The Last Leg," Steve Wiest's "With You," and Charles Gray's off-the-wall rewrite of baseball's national anthem, which he entitles "Knuckleball."

McGill University in Montreal presents us with two diametrically opposed releases. The first, **Kevin Dean's Minor Indiscretions** (McGill 750041; 62:21: ★★★), is performed by a straightahead Messengers-inspired quintet sparked by the jazz prof/leader's trumpet and the Mobley-like tenor of Mike Murley. The program consists entirely of period-authentic Dean originals, which are further enhanced by the pro rhythm team of André White, Neil Swainson, and Dave Laing. Conversely, though, *Late Late Show*, by the **McGill Swing Band** (McGill 750040; 64:39: ★), bears little in common with any of the preceding efforts. This is not a jazz band at all, and even the word "swing" in its billing is a misnomer, for what it plays is simply Las Vegas-showy dance music of a certain era, designed to appeal to the presumably un-hip tastes of its target audience, the members of the graduate classes of the '40s through the '60s.

The most ambitious project overall, however, is that produced by **California Institute Of The Arts**. Entitled *Cal Arts Jazz* (DPRO 79684; 62:32: ★★★), this is at the same time the most contemporaneously oriented and the most varied in terms of texture and substance of all of the entries. Since the sounds range from Third World adaptations through fusion to post-Coleman anti-bop, there should be something here for almost everyone except devotees of pure jazz. But, for those of that persuasion, a more promising view of the future can be had via a handful of jazz combo tracks on *Arts Jazz '90: Live* (★★★), an unnumbered C-60 cassette produced by **Booker T. Washington High School** in Dallas. On these we hear a number of talented young musicians, of whom at least one, guitarist Scott Whigham (see "Auditions" Oct. '90), is a definite wait-and-see. I seem to remember saying the same thing a few years ago about one of this school's earlier graduates, trumpeter Roy Hargrove.

However based on a limited sampling, certain conclusions can be reached about the majority of college jazz today. First, the balance between ensemble discipline and relaxed, communal swing has never before seemed so well-integrated. Second, the nature of the writing now displays more interest in such basic concepts as groove swinging and far less in novelty experimentation for its own sake. But these two positives are offset by a proportionate deficiency in improvisatory abilities. Though all of the soloists heard here are proficient instrumentalists in their own right, none, I'm sorry to say, show any signs of individuality. By far, most of the alto players pattern themselves on Phil Woods, and the tenormen on Rollins and Coltrane, as well as on three subsequent decades-worth of their disciples, while the trumpeters appear universally under the sway of the Brownie-through-Wynton line of descent. **DB**

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Tony Bennett might roust up (never sing!) a chorus or two from a dejected bluesman with that big, brassy, sunny voice. I myself was under the weather the morning I cued up *Forty Years: The Artistry Of Tony Bennett* (Columbia/Legacy C4K 46843; 74:47/61:10/71:55/75:15: ★★★★★), and Bennett hit me—fresh-squeezed OJ, as-

pirins, brisk shower. One could face down tigers, even Manhattan, after a pizzazz of Bennett's pollyanna "Put On A Happy Face," good-humored "Sing You Sinners," forceful "I Get A Kick Out Of You," or—best of all—his kid's wonderment ("Lost In The Stars") and genuine geniality ("Just About Everything").

It's hard not to like Anthony Benedetto (8/3/26, New York), who Bob Hope discovered in 1950 singing in a club with Pearl Bailey and changed his stage name from "Joe Bari." Pros and fans adore him as a primo singer of a



Tony Bennett and the Basie band, 1959

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personal, earthy charm and as a gentleman with a magnanimous spirit as wide as his smile. Mr. Right for the upbeat '50s, Bennett, after a brief Pagliacciesque period, hit top marks (Grammys, charts) with shouters like "Just In Time" and "Who Can I Turn To." Quality quotes praise his voice (Diz: "raw soulfulness," Gil Evans: "great balladeer") and heart (Duke: "totally unselfish," Frank: "he moves me").

These 87 tunes comprise a very personal collection, hand-picked (and individually annotated!) by Bennett himself, which show career gratitude and '60s satisfaction, when studios boomed and New York was a mecca for jazzers. Bennett is no more jazz singer than Sinatra is: neither sings blues or scats worth a darn, while both enjoy superb phrasing and a flair for cracking lyrics. But Bennett had rare affinity for fine players, clout to hire them, taste to give them space, and decency to give them credit. Thus, the juiciest tidbits here are plentiful cameos by top cats like Al Cohn, Tommy Flanagan, Urbie Green, Bobby Hackett, Jo Jones, Joe Newman, Jimmy Rowles, Ralph Sharon, and Zoot Sims, whose bright fillips earn Tony's box its fourth star.

Like Dinah Washington, Bennett owns a power-packed, earthy (if not bluesy) elegance and was a consistent workhorse for a powerful label; three tracks from his duo set with Bill Evans (Fantasy, 1975, see "Reviews" Sept. '90), compelling here amid latter-day big band covers, are the few that fall outside his Columbia legacy of 55 albums. Unlike Dinah, Bennett lived to let grit temper and vulnerability warm his potent chops-wise belting; by 1965, he was sidling into myriad lush ballads. Top-shelf tunes—Gershwin, Johnny Mandel, Cy Coleman, Berlin—may loosen (Beatle George Harrison's "Something") or sweeten (Berlin's "I Got Lost In Her Arms"), but Bennett's credo stays brash American ethos: grab that brass ring! keep smilin! work hard!

Bennett's clarion, nasal, cosy baritone shows weathering but little fraying at 60. High note: Command Performance for Queen Mother, 1965; Bennett belts "If I Ruled The World," Bobby Darin whispers to him, "What do you mean, 'if'?" Bennett bore humbly his torch of democracy, as a later date singing "The Very Thought Of You"—a mailed-fist-in-velvet-glove duet with Bobby Hackett on cornet—attests. Uplift unlimited!

—Fred Bouchard



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Cajun Chasers

by Dan Ouellette

Two years ago, Arhoolie Records owner and ethnomusicologist Chris Strachwitz threw in the towel on the LP configuration and began the arduous task of culling through the over 300 titles in his label's catalog to find the best blues, zydeco, Cajun, and Tex-Mex albums to reissue on CD. And, instead of just reissuing the old LPs as CDs, Strachwitz is repackaging them with bonus cuts to take advantage of the concert-length quality of the CD format.

While known for its wealth of albums by seminal blues artists, Arhoolie has made one of its most important contributions to the preservation of ethnic music with its incredible catalog of classic Cajun and zydeco. Thanks in large part to Arhoolie releases, the late zydeco king Clifton Chenier garnered national recognition, and Beausoleil, led by fiddle ace Michael Doucet, has become known as the leading exponent of *nouveau* Cajun.

Shortly after hearing **Clifton Chenier's** explosive zydeco music on the recommendation of Lightnin' Hopkins, Strachwitz produced the King's 1965 Arhoolie debut, *Louisiana Blues And Zydeco*, which is updated on CD (CD-329; 64:40; ★★★★★) with a bonus cut and the B-side of his *Black Snake Blues* album.



Beausoleil: full-spectrum Cajun

The CD is full of Clifton's hot piano-accordion riffs and his brother Cleveland's clipping *frottoir* (corrugated metal rubboard) rhythms. On some tunes, the kinship to Cajun music is apparent with the rural Louisiana grittiness and chank-a-chank syncopation. But the essence of Clifton's magic comes through in his r&b numbers and straight blues with accordion chaser. He even rocks out on the instrumental cooker, "Hot Rod." Listen to Chenier yelp it up on "Louisiana Two Step" to get a clue as to his *bon temps roulet*.
Chenier is even bluesier on his 1975 classic



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Bogulusa Boogie (CD-347; 50:24: ★★★★★), which includes one extra tune previously unreleased. The King continues to modernize zydeco by inserting a tenor sax into the gumbo mix, which results in some great swing and soul, especially on the rumba-flavored "Je Me Reveiller Le Matin." Strachwitz's request that Clifton include at least one classic zydeco tune in the sessions produces a spicy, Caribbean-influenced dance-hall number, "Allons A Grand Coteau." But the best cuts are the electrifying title piece and the rowdy kicker, "Ride 'Em Cowboy."

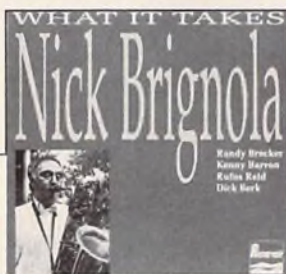
Whereas zydeco gets its energy from blues and Caribbean musical influences, close-cousin Cajun banks on French traditions given new life by Acadian fiddling styles and the syncopated dashes of button accordion. There is no Cajun band better than **Beausoleil**, as is evidenced by *Parlez-Nous A Boire* (CD-322; 62:16: ★★★★★), a CD repackaging of the 1984 Arhoolie album of the same name, three cuts from the band's first Arhoolie album in 1981, and two previously released selections. The full spectrum of the possibilities of Cajun music is represented in this album: romping two-steps, ecstatic swings, passionate blues, solemn waltzes, stunning melodic ballads, and wild stomps. **Michael Doucet** not only brilliantly fiddles up a storm, but also whoops up the festivities with his spirited, rough-hewn vocals.

While Chenier and Beausoleil are the most prominent Cajun and zydeco artists, Arhoolie has recorded lesser-known, but equally talented rural Louisiana-based musicians. The best of the batch of latest Arhoolie reissues is **John Delafosse & His Eunice Playboys'** excellent *Joe Pete Got Two Women* (CD-335; 63:20: ★★★★★). Delafosse plays both piano and button accordions, which enable him to give his zydeco a rich variety of styles, ranging from French Cajun to husky blues. This album features stomps, two-steps, Creole blues, waltzes, and rockers from 1980 and 1983 Arhoolie LPs. An interesting study is the comparison of Delafosse's upbeat "Johnny Can't Dance" with Chenier's bluesy reading of the tune on *Louisiana Blues*.

With the growing interest and popularity of roots music, other labels have also released notable Cajun and zydeco albums. Strachwitz co-produced Clifton's son C.J.'s impressive *Hot Rod* (Slash Records 9 26263-4: ★★★★★½), recorded with his dad's **Red Hot Louisiana Band** and released earlier this year. **C.J. Chenier** has inherited the King's zydeco prowess, but still has a few accordion tricks to learn from his dad's old records as evidenced in his less-than-percolating interpretation of the title cut. (reviewed on cassette)

Meanwhile, Beausoleil has linked up with Rhino/RNA Records and continues to explore the possibilities of Cajun cadences in traditional and modern musical settings on *Cajun Conja* (RNA R2 70525; 47:48: ★★★★★½). More blazing bows from Michael Doucet as well as unique Cajun acoustic guitar flatpicking by brother **David Doucet**, who gets his own opportunity to shine on *Quand J'Ai Parti* (Rounder CD 6040; 45:45: ★★★★★), the first full album of traditional Cajun guitar playing. (albums reviewed on CD unless otherwise noted)

DB



Nick Brignola

WHAT IT TAKES—Reservoir RSR CD 117: *STAR EYES; ASIA; AU PRIVAVE; IN A SENTIMENTAL MOOD; VOYAGE; THE SWEETWATER STRUT; SAIL AWAY; COTTON TAIL*. (62:20)

Personnel: Brignola, baritone, soprano (cuts 2,7), alto (6) saxophones, clarinet (3); Randy Brecker, trumpet (1-3,5-6); Rufus Reid, bass; Kenny Barron, piano; Dick Berk, drums.

★★★

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thriving there) brings us a rocking horse of a different color, stuffed with goodies (braces from Duke, Bird, fellow brassmen, bandmen) and conceived with unusual clarity. The rhythm boys, tight and *simpatico*, make magic with Barron as flexible as a whip and Reid/Berk hand-in-glove. Solo order keeps you guessing: Reid starts "Asia," goes alone under the horns on "Au Privave." Barron often tablesets, silver sparkling, napkins flourished. Berk (met scholarship winner Nick at Berklee, 1958) is a total delight; the no-nonsense timekeeper holds the reins with panache.

Brignola carves his mark with barreling baritone (which chugs mightily on "Star Eyes," burns Barron's sinister "Voyage," and croons "Mood" manfully), but trots out other prime axes. Brig's DeFranconian clarinet (with Brecker muted) courses through "Au Privave," his soprano slinkily lopes on Hal Crook's airy "Asia" and lilts Tom Harrell's pretty "Sail Away," and his torrid, throaty alto pelts his "Sweetwater Strut" (a Messengerian blues march for Ted Curson, occasional bandmate over 20 years). Only the flute is missing here from Nick's broad battery. Brecker, showing well, blows spiffy ensembles and tart solos, with expansive passion on "Strut." Beefs: horns sound echoey, more fours would've spiced up things. Brignola's third for Reservoir, a day at the races, has what it takes with thoroughbred winners. (reviewed on CD)

—Fred Bouchard

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Terence Blanchard

TERENCE BLANCHARD—Columbia CK 47354: *MOTHERLESS CHILD; WANDERING WONDER; TOMORROW'S JUST A LUXURY; GOODBYE; AU PRIVAVE; SING SOWETO; I'M GETTING SENTIMENTAL OVER YOU; AZANIA; AMAZING GRACE. (57:02)*

Personnel: Blanchard, trumpet; Branford Marsalis (cuts 2, 3, 8), Sam Newsome (5, 7, 9), tenor sax; Bruce Barth, piano; Rodney Whitaker, bass; Jeff Watts (2-4), Troy Davis (5-7, 9), drums.

★★★

Tony Lujan

MAGIC CIRCLE—Capri 74023-2: *RAW SILK; SAUL'S SAMBA; MAGIC CIRCLE; SPACE BASS; A LITTLE AMBER; EXCESS BAGGAGE; LA BRUJA. (42:58)*

Personnel: Lujan, trumpet, flugelhorn; Bob Sheppard, tenor, soprano saxes; George Cables, piano; John Patitucci, bass; Tom Brechtlein, drums.

★★★ 1/2

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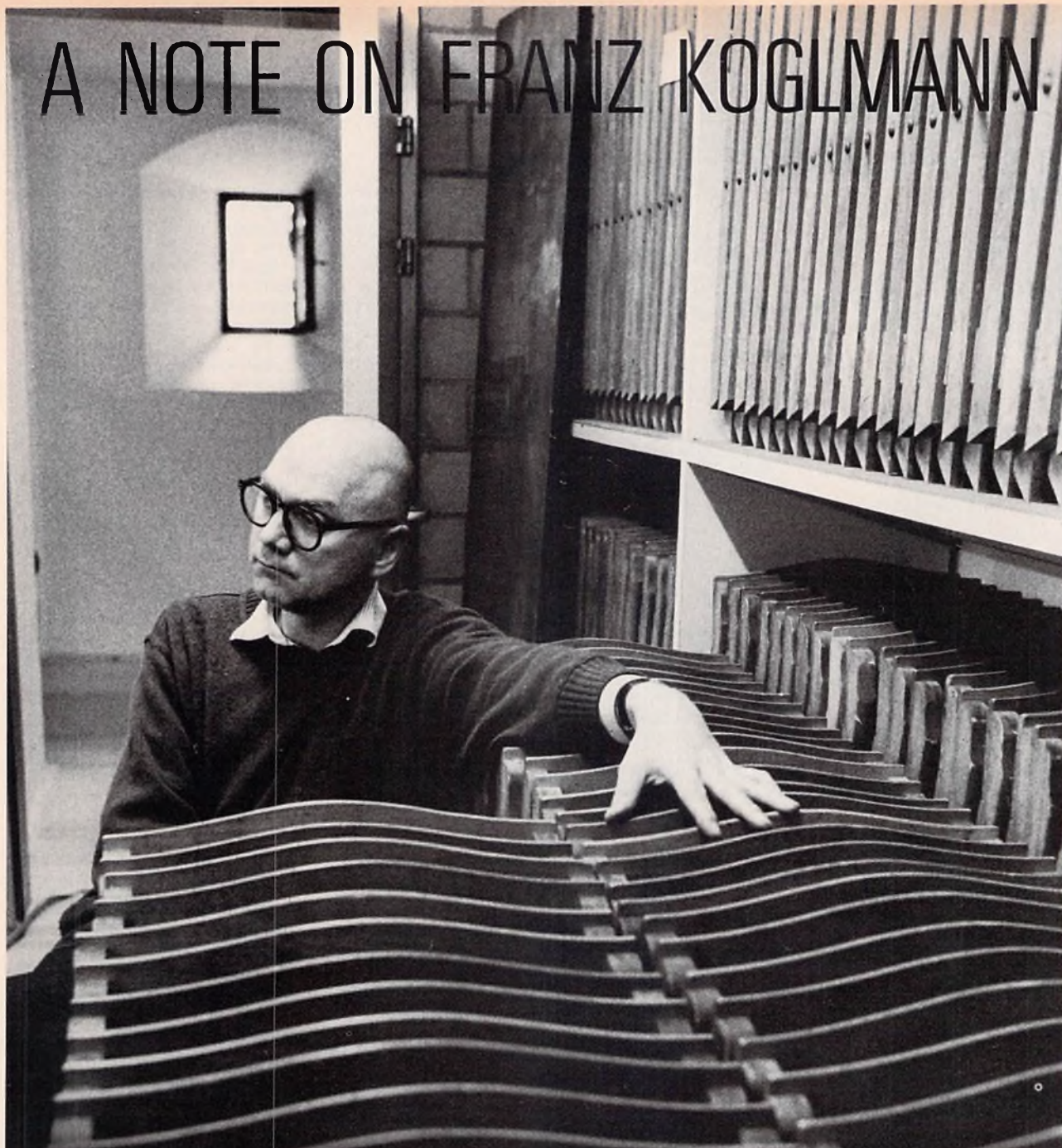
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A NOTE ON FRANZ KOGLMANN



Every act of art – an attempt to intensify our perception of life, and, thus, life itself – is a distortion of things „as they are.“ Such creative distortion can be mild or willful, healing or harmful, surprising or simply reassuring. Great art can be all of these at once.

Though music is the most abstract of art forms, Franz Koglmann's music is unique because it is uncommonly literal... which is not to say programmatic or pictorial. It is somehow misleading, as it is satisfying, to put him in a lineage of such as Jelly Roll Morton, Duke Ellington, Charles Mingus, Gil Evans, George Russell, because he is as different from them as they are from each other. But like them, his compositions are rich in beautifully ambiguous images, which originate in a place so personal that they allow us to respond to them personally. They exist as substance *and* suggestion, in his magical ability to blur the distinctions between form (intellect) and feeling (emotion).

Each of his recordings on *hat ART* is a special, distinct experience, with its own particular moments of drama, seduction,

mystery. They inhabit so many varying moods and modes precisely because of his willingness to acknowledge seemingly contradictory impulses – to trust the „reality of the imagination“ – and to share his creative instincts with strong musicians, who become not interpreters but collaborators.

For all of its poetic ambience – sounds which understand shadows but brave the clear light of day – his is a deeply human music, a triumph of character.

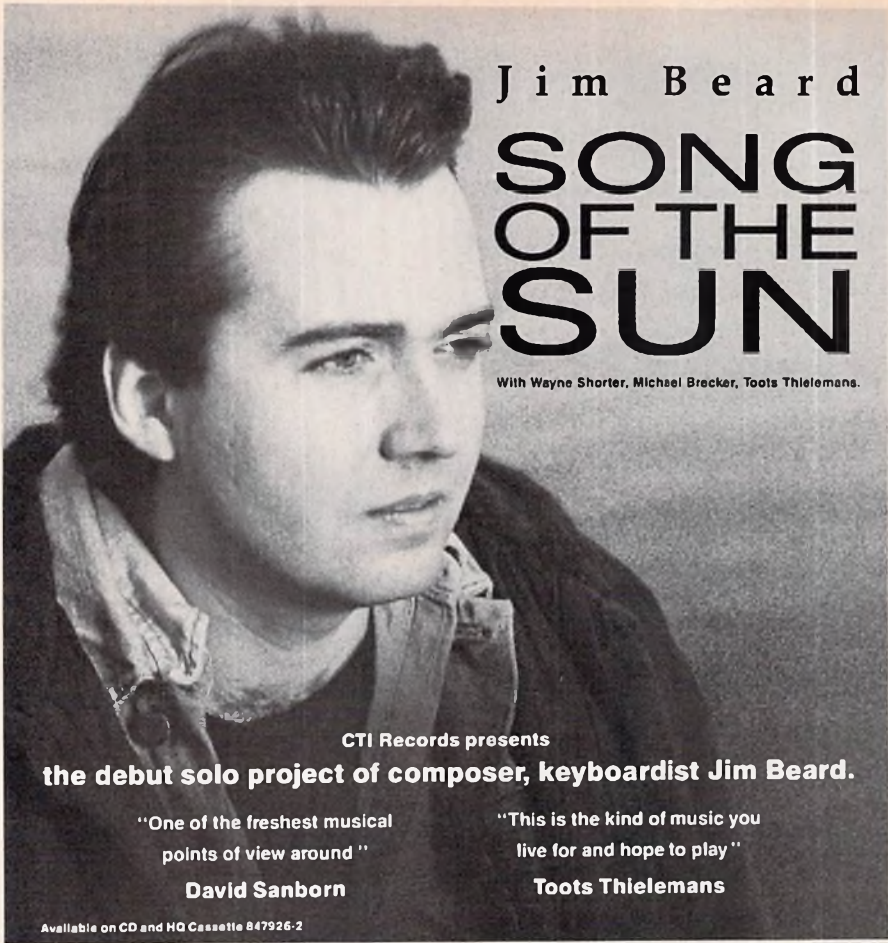
– Art Lange, January 1990

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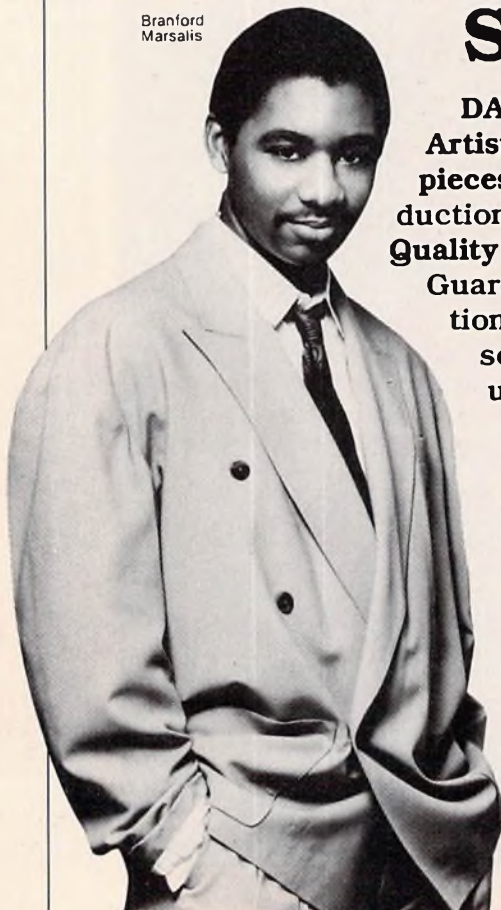
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days. The musicians are young, technically adept, and conversant in bop and its variations (a.k.a. acoustic jazz of the '60s). Unfortunately, individuality and personality haven't arrived yet, in many cases. With Blanchard and Lujan, one finds much promise, even maturity, but less distinctiveness to separate them from their youthful acoustic mainstream peers.

Blanchard, the more heralded trumpeter (through his debut albums with Donald Harrison and his *Mo' Better Blues* soundtrack work), has recently experienced an embouchure change. Today, he's more articulate and thoughtful, although he wasn't bad before. There still remain too many Wynton-isms in his playing, but a quartet performance (*sans* piano) such as "Au Privave" shows that he can shed this studious mold and generate genuine excitement. "Goodbye" is a pretty, lightly embellished performance—he remains true to the character of the tune—but on "Amazing Grace" he loses the essence through busy runs. Both tenor men acquit themselves well in the current pugilistic, oblique post-bop manner, and Barth is a study in Herbie Hancock and Marcus Roberts. Bass and drums are the most exciting aspect of this music, both drummers suggesting the thunderous thump of the late Art Blakey.

Magic Circle checks in more aggressively: brash trumpet; strong-arm tenor and soprano; supple, galloping rhythm section; chops up

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and down. The trumpeter, who gets good words from Clark Terry in the liner notes, comes from the Freddie Hubbard-Tom Harrell school, and on the title track his declamatory entrance recalls Red Rodney. Both he and the band take a progressive, studio-conscious approach. Sheppard is a gun-you-down player like Mike Brecker. The veteran Cables sounds very much at home with the hornmen's highly charged style of modernity. Witness his hot intro to "Excess Baggage." But all is not run-and-gun, as "A Little Amber" shows by its soprano-and-flugelhorn entwined lyricism. Bass and drums are very up-front in this album, manned by energetic players with technique to burn. This is Lujan's debut album. His credits include work in Las Vegas as well as big band experience with Ray Charles, Gerald Wilson, and Bill Holman.

There's nothing "wrong" with either of these albums, just the nagging question of how to separate them from so many others of similar instrumentation, style, and skill. (reviewed on CD) —Owen Cordle



Roy Rogers & Norton Buffalo

R & B—Blind Pig BP 4491: *SO MUCH TO SAY AND SO FEW WORDS; AIN'T NO BREAD IN THE BREADBOX; IS IT LOVE?; STRANGE LOVE; SONG FOR JESSICA; TENDER HEART; HEAVEN SITTING DOWN; THAT'S THE LAST TIME; WHEN THEY TALK LIKE THAT; YOU'RE GONE (WITH THE WIND); MOVE ON WAY FROM HERE; TOO BAD WHEN YOU TOUCH IT.* (43:41)

Personnel: Rogers, guitars, vocals; Buffalo, harmonicas, vocals; Scott Matthews, percussion (cut 2); Doug Harman, cello (4); Phil Richardson, violin (6).

★★★★

All it takes is a sampling of the slide-guitar/harmonica dialog on any one of these songs to comprehend how potent—and exciting—the chemistry is between Rogers and Buffalo. The two have been sporadically gigging in a duo setting for several years at blues clubs in the San Francisco Bay Area, linking up for occasional dates when both were free from their busy schedules—Rogers producing John Lee Hooker albums and touring with this own band and Buffalo traveling with Steve Miller and fronting his own blues outfit. This album has been in the works for over three years, and—while not a classic work by any stretch of the imagination—*R & B* is a romping demonstration of how two blues-based artists so capably and intimately complement each other on their respective instruments.

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The individual songs seem secondary to what goes on during the instrumental breaks. Of course, the numbers heavily influenced by Mississippi Delta blues, such as Reverend Robert Wilkins' "Heaven Sittin' Down" (the only tune not written by either Buffalo or Rogers) and Buffalo's "Move On Way From Here," provide the perfect setting for the unrestrained energy of the harmonica-slide interplay. On other tunes, the pair spice the mix by supplying a multitude of voicings on their individual instruments. Buffalo's harmonica is particularly impressive as a lead instrument as he offers freight-train whistlings, bright trills, rapid-fire riffs, and swirling wails and squeals. Rogers, who has deservedly earned a rep as a slide specialist, slashes, stings, and jabs as well as glides into smooth runs.

There are a few breaks in the momentum where R & B slow the pace down for quieter songs that succeed, thanks in part to Buffalo's passionate vocals. But the real business at hand deals with the spark-plug tunes—the leader of the pack being the killer boogie "Is It Love?"—where the two virtuosos engage in dynamic musical conversations that are both rarefied and earthy. (reviewed on cassette)

—Dan Ouellette

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Claudio Roditi is a former member of the Herbie Mann Group, Charlie Rouse's Cinnamon Flower Band and is currently touring with Dizzy Gillespie's United Nation Band and the Paquito D'Rivera Quintet. His most recent album is Slow Fire on Milestone Records.

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Miles Davis

'58 SESSIONS—Columbia/Legacy CK 47835: *ON GREEN DOLPHIN STREET; FRAN DANCE; STELLA BY STARLIGHT; LOVE FOR SALE; STRAIGHT, NO CHASER; MY FUNNY VALENTINE; OLEO.* (64:23)

Personnel: Davis, trumpet; John Coltrane, tenor saxophone; Cannonball Adderley, alto saxophone; Bill Evans, piano; Paul Chambers, bass; Jimmy Cobb, drums.

★★★★½

CIRCLE IN THE ROUND—Columbia/Legacy C2K 46862: *TWO BASS HIT; LOVE FOR SALE; BLUES NO. 2; CIRCLE IN THE ROUND; TEO'S BAG; SIDE CAR I; SIDE CAR II; SPLASH; SANCTUARY; GUINNEVERE.* (48:44/50:07)

Personnel: Davis, trumpet, chimes and bells (cut 4); with, among others, John Coltrane, Wayne Shorter, saxophones; Bill Evans, Herbie Hancock, Chick Corea, Joe Zawinul, keyboards; George Benson, electric guitar; Paul Chambers, Ron Carter, Dave Holland, bass; Philly Joe Jones, Jimmy Cobb, Tony Williams, drums.

★★★★½

Both of these collections are just that—collections. Containing previously released material, *'58 Sessions* and *Circle In The Round* represent, among other things, record company shuffling in an attempt to issue loose ends from the amazing recorded legacy of Miles Davis. And of course, Columbia has the lion's share of material (not to mention the reportedly immense supply of unissued Miles in their vaults).

Including the first three tunes from half of the original *L'Ascenseur Pour L'Echafaud* (see "Reviews" Feb. '90), *'58 Sessions* is the more integrated set, thanks mainly to the unchanging personnel and because the music represents just one year in the life of the then-Miles Davis Sextet. A studio date in May (the initial four tunes) finds Jimmy Cobb and Bill Evans recording their first music with Miles, having replaced Philly Joe Jones and Red Garland in the wake of another album from '58, the legendary *Milestones*.

Despite Evans' softer touch and the shift to cover more ballads, most of the music from *'58 Sessions* is a delightful, swinging romp, with a mostly muted Miles and plenty of blowing from Trane and Cannonball. Cannonball sits out on "Stella," the gentle "My Funny Valentine" is a feature for Evans and Davis only, and "Love For Sale" (first issued in 1975!) is less adorned, more freewheeling than the version Davis cut for a Cannonball date just 10 weeks earlier. "Digital restoration" appears to have saved what was originally an underrecorded Miles on Sonny Rollins' "Oleo," with the then-relatively overrecorded Cobb now more listenable. The live music comes from a late July date done

just weeks after Columbia recorded the band at Newport (heard on *Miles And Coltrane*—see "Reviews" Nov. '88). Initially released in '73 as *Jazz At The Plaza*, the program mistakenly listed Philly Joe as the drummer and included another cut which could have easily been added here, an eight-minute version of "If I Were A Bell." What gives?

Circle In The Round and *'58 Sessions* share the same version of "Love For Sale." That's about all they share. Only two tunes are from the '50s, the rest serving to chronicle the unwanted "scraps" from recording dates from 1961 through 1970. Originally a '79 twofer, *Circle In The Round* helps fill the gaps between albums and offers interesting musical commentary: 1967's "Circle In The Round," a 26-minute number, is a mesmerizing, sometimes tedious piece with Joe Beck providing trippy, drone-like electric guitar; '68's "Teo's Bag," both "Side Car's," and "Splash" all reflect Miles' growing unease with chord changes and bop rhythms in general, and provide a backdrop to the quintet studio albums of the period; "Sanctuary," also from '68, is a less caustic, more serene take on a tune that would later be recorded with fuller ensemble on *Bitches Brew*. As for the 18-minute version of pop star David Crosby's "Guinnevere," complete with sitar, let's just say it's an interesting historical footnote. (reviewed on CD) —John Ephland

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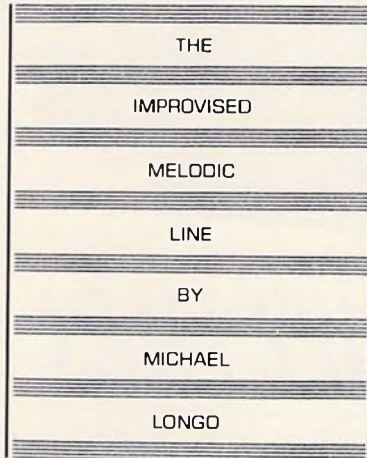
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RECORD & CD REVIEWS

Woods On Fire

by Owen Cordle

Woods sets house on fire," said the headline. It was true. **Phil Woods** had smoked that night, a thorough professional stretching the limits of his creativity. It's this way every time he picks up his alto saxophone or clarinet, as five new albums reiterate.

The hottest, *Side By Side* (Muse MCD 6016; 51:36: ★★★★★), is a reissue under alto man **Richie Cole's** name. Recorded live in Denver in 1980, it shows master and student challenging each other to the finish. Both emerge victorious. Hang on to your hat as they devour "Donna Lee" at 90 bars-a-minute. Dig guest tenor man "Lockjaw" Davis' open-throated shouting on "Save Your Love For Me," but be advised that white men can get the deep blues expressionism, too—in B; if you please—on Cole's "Eddie's Mood," a lead-in to the title track. **John Hicks** (piano), **Walter Booker** (bass), and **Jimmy Cobb** (drums) run with the sax men all the way, cookin', as it were.

In 1989 Woods played in a big band led by **Kansas City pianist Jay McShann**, under whose name comes *Paris All-Star Blues* (MusicMasters 5052-2-C; 69:45: ★★★). The album, subtitled "A Tribute To Charlie Parker," deals with Bird's roots more than his bebop innovations. You get lots of boogie piano, riff-style big band charts, and a bluesy feeling overall. Woods solos only on the McShann-Walter Brown tune "Lonely Boy Blues" and



Phil Woods: seamless dancing

Bird's "Parker's Mood," his emphatic blues declarations swinging hard. Elsewhere, **Clark Terry**, **James Moody**, **Al Grey**, et al., solo, but no one tops tenor saxophonist **Jimmy Heath**, heard on "Tender Touch," a ballad by **Ernie Wilkins**, who arranged much of the material on this album. The charts don't exploit the big band to the fullest, but they do swing.

Woods' own Little Big Band performs on *Real Life* (Chesky JD47; 68:56: ★★★★★), and this is an octet that sounds considerably larger. Along with Woods' working quintet (with trombonist **Hal Crook**, pianist **Jim McNeely**, bassist **Steve Gilmore**, and drummer **Bill Goodwin**), we have saxophonists **Nelson Hill** (tenor and alto) and **Nick Brignola** (bari and alto) and ex-Quintet trumpeter **Tom Harrell**. Arrangers

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Woods, Crook, and McNeely conjure up images of the Gerry Mulligan and Thad Jones-Mel Lewis big bands (Harrell's "Sail Away" and Crook's "Laddy Buck," respectively) as well as blues and bebop combos. The charts are romantic, fiery, lyrical, complex, and sometimes zany. There's a bit of (three) Alto Madness (a bow to the Woods-Cole partnership?) on Woods' "Quill," named for alto saxophonist Gene Quill. (Remember Phil and Quill?) Throughout, every soloist exemplifies improvisational maturity and the ability to swing in the proper mood.

The bigger-band bug bites Woods on his quintet album *All Bird's Children* (Concord Jazz CCD-4441; 60:19: ★★★★★), where the writing and ensemble work again sound larger

than life. The alto-and-trombone blend sometimes implies the Lighthouse All-Stars (even as Crook occasionally suggests the late Frank Rosolino, but not effusively) and sometimes the '60s Jazz Messengers a bit, but these are coincidental to the well-established Woods combo sound. Hal Galper (since replaced by McNeely) is the pianist here and contributes a fine block-chord solo on Benny Carter's "Just A Mood." Crook, a superb soloist throughout, can make his trombone do anything he wants and yet not sound finicky or smug about it. Favorite track for big-city romance: Galper's "Gotham City," arranged by Woods. Favorite for humor: Crook's oblique revision of "The Best Is Yet To Come."

An earlier album, *Phil Woods Live* (Novus

3104-4-N; 65:43: ★★★★★½), recorded at the Showboat Lounge in 1976, and a '77 Grammy winner, captures the beginning of the Quintet (actually the Quintet—Woods, Gilmore, Goodwin, pianist Mike Melillo, and guitarist Harry Leahey—plus guest-percussionist Alyrio Lima). The reasons are obvious: Woods' ability to dance seamlessly over hot coals (check the murderous tempos of "Cheek To Cheek," "I'm Late," and "High Clouds"), the unity of the ensemble work (especially those stop-on-a-dime breaks), the joyous feeling of the band, and the twin peaks of intelligence and s-w-i-n-g. The half-star off is a way of saying that Woods and company, as good as they were then, are even better today. (reviewed on cassette, all others on CD)

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1 James Clay

"Things Ain't What They Used To Be" (from *I LET A SONG GO OUT OF MY HEART*, Antilles) Clay, tenor sax; Cedar Walton, piano; David Williams, bass; Billy Higgins, drums.

The name of this tune is "Things Ain't What They Used To Be." I think this is James Clay, so I guess that must be Cedar Walton and Billy Higgins. I'd give that at least 4 stars. James is one of my favorites. I've known him for many years. We're from the same area, and I've always had a lot of respect for his playing. James has been a little ill, so he's not as strong now as he's been in the past, but I still recognize his style of playing. He doesn't play with as much strength and energy, but he seems to be trying to pull through this. We did a thing at the Vanguard not too long ago where I had James Clay as a guest artist. And of course, I love Cedar and Billy Higgins, and then David Williams.

2 Stanley Turrentine

"Impressions" (from *SUGAR*, CTI) Turrentine, tenor sax; Freddie Hubbard, trumpet; George Benson, guitar; Butch Cornell, organ; Ron Carter, bass; Billy Kaye, drums; Richard "Pablo" Landrum, conga.

That sounds like Stanley Turrentine. He and Hank Crawford were guest artists on the live album I did at the Village Vanguard called *Fire*. I had always wanted to do something with Stanley, and that was my chance to get to play with him. I can't remember the name of this, but it sounds like one of the old Miles Davis tunes. And that's probably Jimmy Smith on organ. I guess I would give that about 5 stars.

3 James Moody

"Look Into My Eyes" (from *HONEY*, Novus) Moody, tenor sax; Todd Coolman, bass.

That's James Moody playing, but I don't know the name of the tune. I was going to say the bass player was Ray Drummond, but I know it's not him.

LB: It's Todd Coolman.

DN: Oh, yeah. I know Todd, and I should have been able to catch that, because Todd has played with me quite a few times. And I know that Todd did play with Moody for a while. I'd give that 5 stars.

4 Johnny Griffin

"63rd Street Theme" (from *THE CAT*, Antilles) Griffin, tenor sax; Michael Weiss, piano; Dennis Irwin, bass; Kenny Washington, drums.

DAVID "FATHEAD" NEWMAN

by Larry Birnbaum

He's a saxophonist from Dallas who can moan bittersweet blues with a husky burr, but David "Fathead" Newman is not just another Texas tenor. A smooth-toned, funk-tinged post-bop mainstreamer who also plays alto, soprano, and flute, Newman is equally comfortable jamming with Venezuelan salsa star Oscar D'Leon or crooning amid the strings on Natalie Cole's chart-topping tribute to her father, *Unforgettable*. Best known for his long tenure with Ray Charles' classic band, he later spent several years with Herbie Mann and has cut two-dozen albums under his own name, many for Atlantic. His latest, *Back To Basics*, is a best-of compilation on Milestone.

Last year, Newman joined Art Blakey and Dr. John to record *Bluesiana Triangle* (Windham Hill), a benefit album for the homeless that turned out to be Blakey's last session (see *DB* Aug. '90). The success of that project spawned *Bluesiana 2*, also on Windham Hill, with



Ray Anderson completing the leadership triangle and Living Colour's Will Calhoun replacing Blakey on drums. According to Newman, the sequel came off being more solid than the original, and with the same air of spontaneity. "The only rehearsing we did," he said, "was in the studio." This was his first Blindfold Test.

Johnny Griffin. I don't know the name of this tune; it sounds like it might be one of Griffin's original tunes. I'll take a wild guess—is it Michael Weiss on piano? I'd give this 4½.

5 Steve Coleman And Five Elements

"Black Phonemics" (from *BLACK SCIENCE*, Novus) Coleman, alto sax; James Weidman, piano; David Gilmore, guitar; Reggie Washington, electric bass; Marvin "Smitty" Smith, drums.

It sounds like Arthur Blythe. Is this that young alto player who used to be with Art? Is it Smitty on drums? Actually it's not that bad—it has form to it, and I can understand what they're doing. Some of the "out" stuff gets to my ear pretty good. I'd give it 4.

6 Tab Smith

"Because of You" (from *JUMP TIME*, Delmark) Smith, alto sax; Sonny Cohn, trumpet; Leon Washington, tenor sax; Teddy Brannon, piano; Wilfred Middlebrooks, bass; Walter Johnson, drums.

That's Tab Smith, and the tune is "Because Of You." That's sweet. He almost had a Johnny Hodges sound. I was playing alto in those days, and I listened to Tab Smith, Louis Jordan, Earl Bostic, Eddie "Clean-

head" Vinson, and Buster Smith. Bird was influenced by Buster—he heard him when Buster was living in Kansas City. Yeah, I'd give this 5 stars.

7 Booker Ervin

"In A Capricornian Way" (from *BACK FROM THE GIG*, Blue Note) Ervin, tenor sax; Woody Shaw, trumpet; Kenny Barron, piano; Jan Arnett, bass; Billy Higgins, drums.

Booker Ervin. Booker came from an area just north of Dallas, around Denton, and we used to get together a lot. Booker would come down and jam, and Ornette [Coleman] would be on the scene. I was playing with Red Conner, a tenor player from Ft. Worth, but Red wouldn't let Ornette play too much. Ornette would play a Bird solo like note-for-note; but when that was over, Ornette would start to play on his own, and he would just play so long that Red didn't want to let him play. Ornette was still playing the tenor at that time, and I was playing alto.

But Booker and I used to get together and jam. He would come down and stay in Dallas, or sometimes we'd go up to Denton and play, and he'd take us over to his house and have his mom cooking food for us. His mom was crazy about him, and she would tolerate the music, where most parents in those days didn't want to hear this noise. Is that Billy Higgins on drums? I'd give that 4½ stars. **DB**