

STEVE TURRE BLINDFOLD TEST

DOWN BEAT

Jazz, Blues & Beyond

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B.B.'s Kingdom

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Dewey Redman

A Lone Wolf's Cringe

Abbey Lincoln

Gets Paid

Controlling Chaos With

Tom Harrell

75th Anniversary of
Jazz Record #1



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JONNIE MILES

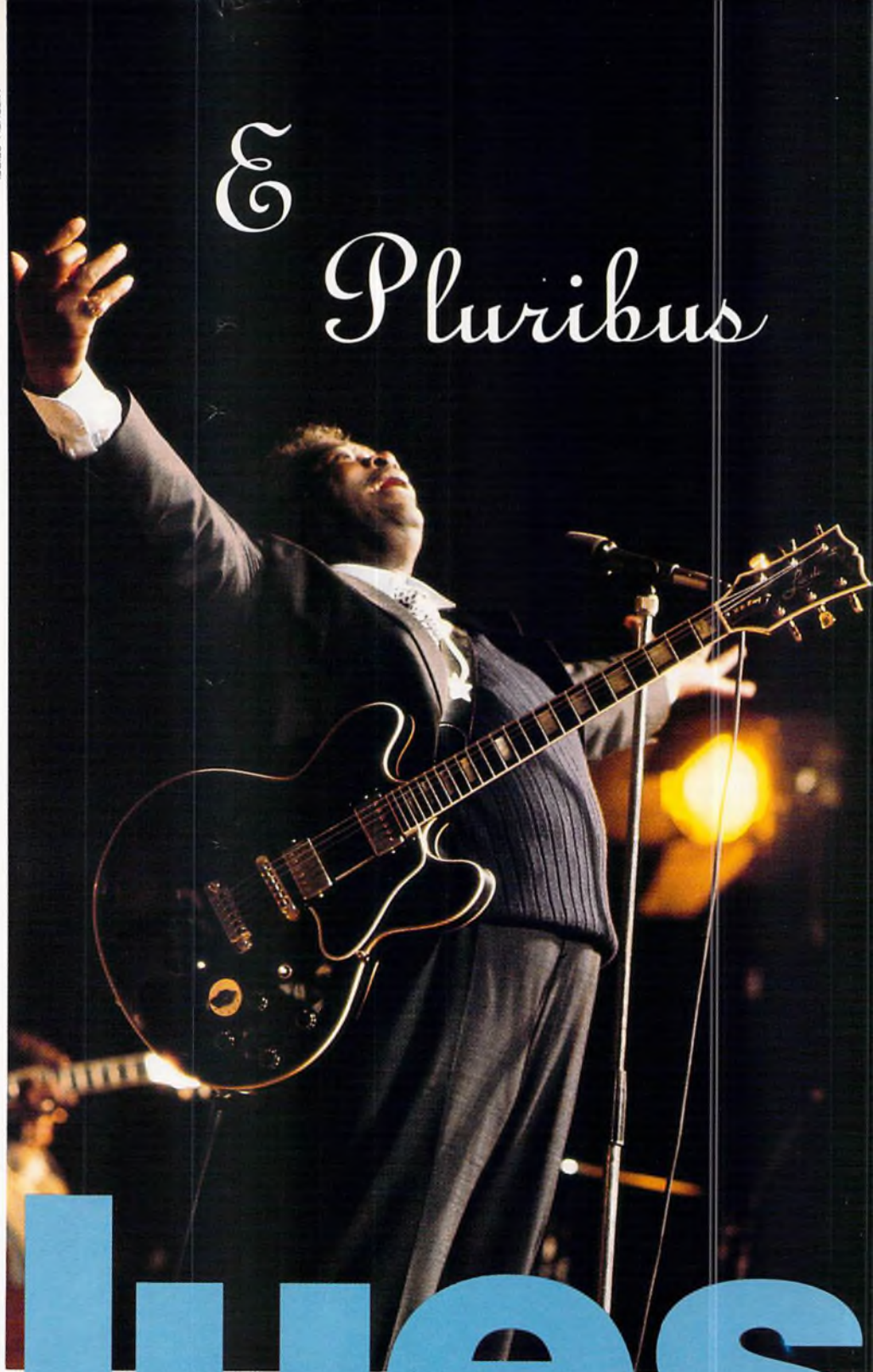
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&

Pluribus

"I've never been
the father or husband
I should have been,
and those moments
are gone.
But that's the way
it is most times
when you're living
a public life.
But I've been lucky—
my music has
been accepted
by more kinds
of people
and been heard
in more kinds
of places than
any other blues."



Blues



Blues revivals—starting with the first big one of the mid- to late '60s—have been good to Riley B. King. Though the 66-year-old is still on the road an average of 275 days a year—much more than his more famous devoted students—he's looking fat and prosperous. And why not? Named Blues/Soul/R&B Musician of the Year in DB's 1991 Readers Poll, he's been collecting awards and playing high-ticket venues like Las Vegas and Lincoln Center as well as lounges in Alaska; opening his own club, the Blues Bar, on the famed Beale Street of Memphis, where the Blues Boy got his radio nickname and his start; donating his collection of 20,000-plus rare recordings to the University of Mississippi; continuing to work for the Foundation for the Advancement of Inmate Recreation and Rehabilitation (FAIRR), which he co-founded with F. Lee Bailey, and the John F. Kennedy Performing Arts Center, of which he's a founding member; pulling in Grammys and making the talk-show rounds; playing for Queen Elizabeth and at the White House for George Bush's 1989 inaugural; popping up on documentaries aired over PBS and HBO. No matter how you look at it, B.B.'s been staying very visible.

So in the midst of this latest blues revival, which finds Jeff Beck and Eric Clapton jamming with Buddy Guy and Bonnie Raitt sitting in with John Lee Hooker, it's not surprising that his time has come—again. For sometime this summer, MCA is planning to release a four-CD boxed set that spans his legacy from his first 1951 hit, "The Three O'Clock Blues," on up to today. After all, he not only helped to further insinuate diverse strains like gospel and swing into the blues via his smoothly crying vocals, but also helped shape the sound of single-string blues guitar playing by mixing an eclectic array of sources.

According to B.B., eclecticism has been his musical game from the get-go. "I grew up liking people like Johnny Moore and the

the big-band sounds of Duke Ellington, and Count Basie and Woody Herman and Benny Goodman and Charlie Christian.

"This is long before I was a disc jockey. They used to have these video jukebox setups where you see a short film of the performers; each of them was about three-to-five minutes long. That's how I was introduced to the big bands and people like Ella Fitzgerald and Nat Cole and Cab Calloway. And then, when I was a dj, I discovered Django Reinhardt: I loved his vibrato and sense of melody, especially when he recorded with just a regular rhythm section." Given this list, maybe it's not surprising that B.B. shares heroes like Cole and Louis Jordan with Ray Charles, another towering African-American artist who's blithely sailed over externally imposed categories to commercial success.

He sees his musical broad-mindedness as the key to outings like his sharing a stage with rockers U2 for that band's concert film and album, *Rattle And Hum*, or his own synth-laden *King Of The Blues: 1989*. "None of this has changed my way of working," he insists. "It's just given me more to think about while trying to perform. When I first started to play, the audience was my age and older, and it kept being that way until the late 1960s. Then we got a new following—all the white teenagers who heard about the blues from their idols, like Eric Clapton.

"The audience now is a much wider range of people, from the very young on up: two-thirds of my audience ranges between eight and 30 years old. My association with U2 has brought even really young kids in to hear what I do. So I will do things now I probably wouldn't have done years ago, because I didn't know to do these things then. For instance, I survey each audience and see musically as well as visually how they take certain tunes. So if I do a couple of tunes that get no real reaction—I'm talking about it in terms of having an apple and seeing a kid who wants it—I shift to different lines. I've got to try and be a pleaser."

The self-contradictions—and the suppressed anger behind some of them—clearly indicate B.B. King's sense of defensiveness about his current sounds. There are those, including me, who dispute his contention about exactly how deep his commercial need to please any crowd may be. The way he responds, with some modulated irritation in his voice, runs like this: "It's really strange that the same folks who support you when you're struggling, turn their backs on you or start running you down when you've gotten somewhere. They think it's some kind of betrayal, but I'm the one

who feels betrayed. That just doesn't seem like a good reason. It's not fair to me. Why would you support somebody only when they're struggling and not be happy for them when they've made it? You can't stand still."

There's more than a touch of truth in what he says, of course. Devotees of folk forms like the blues tend to get overpoweringly defensive when they see their notions of a genre's

"purity" or "integrity" messed with. It's a misplaced sense of possessiveness rooted in some good intentions, like the idea that these forms have their own very real value that shouldn't be condescended to; and some not-so-good, like the idea that the older forms were more "spontaneous" or "natural." This misshapen Romanticism implicitly, if sometimes inadvertently, denies its subjects the benefit of either artistic consciousness or continuing growth. No room is left to ask what allowed kidnapped Africans to

man

Three Blazers, and his brother Oscar Moore, who played with Nat Cole," he intones in the same gospel-inflected cadences that power his singing. "In fact, Robert Jr. Lockwood, who was in one of my earliest bands, brought that same jazzy influence into it. I also liked Jimmie Rodgers and Hank Williams; Jimmie Rodgers was one of the first white country singers to sing blues that black people liked. Believe it or not, Gene Autry did some things with that feeling, too. Lonnie Johnson. I was crazy about Louis Armstrong,

adapt strange instruments and musical formats to their own forbidden music and produce peculiarly American strains like blues and jazz. And if these sounds are natural how can they possibly be tampered with, never mind improved?

That I see B.B.'s recent albums as a series of esthetically unchallenging efforts to recast his already-hybridized blues, via ubiquitous synthesizers, for the MTV crowd is based on an artistic difference of opinion. It isn't driven by a set of notions trafficking in misplaced and imaginary blues purism. It strikes me that the late-'60s, early-'70s meshing of his singing, vocalic guitar with the Atlantic Records soul-music house rhythm section produced both chart-busting and esthetically satisfying results. Albums like *Live And Well* and *Completely Well* yielded a challenging blues fusion as well as his big crossover single, "The Thrill Is Gone."



Defending his latest directions, B.B. reaches for a revealing observation. "I don't want to compare myself to President Bush," he begins. "But in my own small way, doing what I do, I have to make some of the same kinds of decisions he does. He has so many different constituencies to please—so many more than I do, of course. But he has to walk a fine line about what they want. In my way, so do I."

Again, true enough as far as it goes. But this points to one part of what is most troublesome to a fan about B.B.'s attitude toward his music today. Asked why he's doing what he's doing, he doesn't provide an artistic rationale, as he could and did with those great breakthrough albums of two decades ago (as a similarly beleaguered Miles Davis could and did when disgruntled critics blasted pioneering efforts like *Bitches Brew* or *On The Corner*). Instead, B.B. draws on the circular logic of a demographic justification. If you want to watch the circle break down, go back and reread the quote where he explains how he hasn't really changed what he does, then explains why he's changed what he does.

Then, too, there's the simple and undeniable fact that, through his Grammys, and TV talk-show appearances, and constant touring, B.B. King is hardly an unknown. If anything, he's become—rightly—a kind of icon. The portions of his audiences who are coming to see him via his U2 connection, for example, are coming to see *him*. They're there to learn more about him and celebrate what he does, not to walk out. So why, then, does he feel so skittish about their loyalty?



The sweep of King's influences points up some of the funny ways in which blues history has been misunderstood—funny ways that may throw some light on B.B.'s own current activities. Bluesmen like Charlie Patton and the Mississippi Sheiks usually boasted wide-ranging repertoires that included everything from spirituals to rags to current hits; since they played street corners and juke-joint dances (and some, like the Sheiks, did white dances as well), their livelihoods depended on being able to please their audiences, who weren't at all shy about shouting out requests. As B.B. says, "The blues has never been just one big thing. In fact, it's always been a lot of different things. You can't really compare Blind Lemon with Muddy or Skip James or Son House; they're individuals."

But when recording began to document blues in a big—if haphazard and unwitting—way during the early '30s, it relegated the results to a marketing niche: race records aimed at rural, black listeners. That had two historical effects. First, it limited what parts of their musical bags the artists reached into for recording:

the white label owners and field producers reasoned that the black, record-buying public would want to hear "down-home" sounds above all others; and until the war, the 78s sold well enough to keep them feeling justified. As a result, we've gotten a somewhat distorted picture of blues as a collection of relatively isolated regional forms.

So a figure like Robert Johnson seems even more astounding partly because of the sheer reach of his stylistic tastes. Johnson was the first generation where music in rural areas became available on jukeboxes and radio, and he apparently drank in whatever came his way. It was natural. Two of his outstanding contemporaries, T-Bone Walker and Charlie Christian, both descendants of Blind Lemon Jefferson's Texas-blues guitar, played in swing bands and blues combos alike. Given that historical context, it shouldn't have surprised anybody who's followed the music when B.B. and Albert King were among the bluesmen who began to explore soul-music crossovers during the '60s.

Second, the division of taste by race perpetuated an approach to selling sounds that began with Jim Crow and is still too prevalent in the modern recording industry. Album-oriented radio (AOR), which Vernon Reid (who last year co-produced a couple of tracks for B.B. that may surface on the blues great's next release), dubbed "Apartheid-Oriented Radio" because of its near-totally white playlists, is just one facet of a contemporary, racially-bounded marketing strategy. That may be why it's no picnic dialing around trying to find some station that's playing the newest B.B. King release.

Notes B.B. from his perspective: "Blues has always been a stepchild in the music business. People often put it down, and put you down if you played it. I've worked to change that. You've got to look and behave a certain way. My cousin Bukka White told me years ago, 'When you're going to perform, dress like you're going to the bank to borrow some money.' I tried to incorporate that attitude into my music as a whole. I've sacrificed for that. I missed out on my children growing up, didn't take them to the movies much. Both of my wives quit me simply because my head has been involved in that.

"So I've never been the father or the husband I should have been, and those moments are gone. I spend more time with my grandchildren than I did with my children—which I get talked about for [laughs]. But that's the way it is most times when you're living a public life. And I've been lucky—my music has been accepted by more kinds of people and been heard in more kinds of places than any other blues."

DB

EQUIPMENT

"B.B. King can sound like himself on a cardboard box," explains Tim Shaw, vice president of product development at Gibson, about the Lucille model in Gibson's Artist Collection. "We wanted to make a tuxedo guitar, something very elegant, as befits the man." Based on the original ES-355 which King had played for years, Lucille has the same Varitone circuit to control the mid-range that is found in the 355 but with an added stereo/mono circuit with dual-output jacks not found in the original. "Lucille" is enlaced on the peghead much as King writes it.

If you want to learn how he plays Lucille, DCI has a three-volume instructional video, *B.B. King Blues Master*. The videos cover everything from his equipment and warming up to his influences and signature phrases.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

- | | |
|--|---|
| THERE'S ALWAYS ONE MORE TIME—MCA 10295 | ANTHOLOGY OF THE BLUES—B.B. KING '94/95—Kent 9011 |
| KING OF THE BLUES: 1989—MCA 42183 | GREATEST HITS OF B.B. KING—Ace 552 |
| NOW APPEARING AT OLE MISS—MCA 8016 | ROCK ME BABY—Ace 119 |
| GUESS WHO?—MCA 10351 | CONFESSIN' THE BLUES—ABC 528 |
| KING OF THE BLUES: 1989—MCA 42183 | LIVE AT THE REGAL—MCA 31106 |
| THE BEST OF B.B. KING, VOL. 1—Flair/Virgin 91691 | LIVE AND WELL—MCA 27008 |
| | COMPLETELY WELL—MCA 27009 |

For Love Of Abbey

ABBEY LINCOLN

By Michael Bourne

*Bird alone, flying high,
flying through a cloudy sky,
sending mournful, soulful sounds
soaring over troubled grounds.
Bird alone, with no mate,
turning corners, tempting fate,
flying circles in the air,
are you on your way somewhere?
Gliding, soaring on the wind,
you're a sight of glory.
Flying way up there so high,
wonder what's your story?*

Aнна Maria Wooldridge. Gaby Lee. Aminata Moseka. Abbey Lincoln. They're all that bird, alone but flying high in song. Abbey wrote the song—or, as Abbey always says, “found” the song. It's the song that opens her newest Verve release, *You Gotta Pay The Band* (see “Reviews” Dec. '91). And with this album, she's enjoying the greatest success of her life as an artist. “It's wonderful what's happening for me,” says Abbey with awe in her voice and delight in her eyes. “I thought I would probably die in obscurity. I didn't mind. Lots of people have. I don't mean nobody would know me, but sometimes you're bigger in death than you are in life.”

Anna Maria Wooldridge was born in 1930, the 10th of 12 children. “I think I was really just born for what I do. I've been singing since I was a little girl. I grew up on a farm in the house my father built in Michigan. There was a piano and I picked out melodies. We had a Victrola. I'd look into the Victrola and see if I could find the people singing. I'd sing in church and school, sometimes as a soloist. When I was in high school in Kala-

mazoo, I tried out for the *show* and they gave me a featured spot the three years I was there. I sang ‘Don't Blame Me,’ ‘Stormy Weather,’ ‘Sunday Kind Of Blue,’ songs I heard Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan, Billie Holiday, and Lena Horne sing.”

Anna Maria won an amateur contest at 19, ventured to Los Angeles, and soon was singing at joints and restaurants on the road—for more than two years in Honolulu. When she returned to Los Angeles, she was featured at the Moulin Rouge. “They changed my name to Gaby Lee so I'd have a French name. Don Arden, a crazy man, put the whole show together, elephants on stage, poodles dyed pink. I wore dresses with slits, big hats with feathers.”

Bob Russell, the lyricist of “Crazy He Calls Me” and other great songs, became her mentor. “We'd go to dinner and talk and talk. He gave me books to read. He encouraged me and turned out to be my manager. We were looking for another name. People were calling me Gabby *Hayes* and that was the pits. I didn't want Anna Maria anymore because there was Anna Maria Alberghetti.

Bob came to rehearsal one day and said, ‘I've got a name for you, Abbey Lincoln. Abraham Lincoln didn't free the slaves but maybe you can handle it.’ I accepted the challenge but it gave me an uneasy feeling. Remember, they killed Lincoln.”

The Girl Can't Help It, a forgettable picture in 1956, starred Jayne Mansfield and a variety of singers: Julie London, Fats Domino, Little Richard, the Platters . . . and Abbey Lincoln. “I sang in this orange dress with bust pads. It was worn by Marilyn Monroe in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*.” Abbey, in the dress, appeared on the cover of *Ebony*. “I was supposed to be *sepia*—sexy, they said. Bob Russell wrote this song in the picture, ‘Spread the word, Spread the gospel, Speak the truth and it will be heard,’ and I had on this phony dress. It was a contradiction in my life. I was always a nice girl and now I was this *siren*! It was about to drive me crazy. I was scared. Max Roach saved my life, I believe this, literally. He came to see me all the way to Winnipeg. He said, ‘I don't like that dress! I never wore it again. I burned it!’”



MICHELL SEIDEL

They were introduced when Abbey was Anna Maria. "I hadn't heard of him. I'd heard of Charlie Parker only vaguely. I was hanging with the r&b crowd. When he came to see me he was just wonderful to be around, handsome, sophisticated. When I met him again, first thing, he gave me sanctuary. We started to live together. I didn't need to work. I was his love. We got married in 1962."

Bob Russell produced her first album with Benny Carter. Max produced *That's Him* in 1957, with Sonny Rollins, Kenny Dorham, and himself at the drums. They worked and recorded together often the next 10 years. "Max taught me about composing. I never would've met Coleman Hawkins if it hadn't been for Max. All of these musicians I had a chance to work with—Thelonious Monk, John Coltrane, Max called them."

The Freedom Now Suite is highlighted by a wordless Abbey and Max duet, "Prayer/Protest/Peace," with her voice and his drums at first hopeful, then screaming, then at peace. "I wonder sometimes what might've happened to me if I hadn't been found screaming on this album. Some people were hostile. Some people decided I was a great singer, critics who never thought I was part of the music until this album."

Abbey also acted, in *Nothing But A Man* in 1964 and *For Love Of Ivy* opposite Sidney Poitier in 1968, but this time without the artifice. "I was this rebellious woman wearing her hair natural and speaking her mind!" Abbey and Max became the first real-life black couple in a television commercial, for Maxwell House in 1959, but the marriage was disintegrating. "I've always loved him and still do. I'm not *in* love with him anymore, but it took me a long time to fall *out* of love."

Abbey was supposed to play Billie Holiday in *Lady Sings The Blues*. "I was concerned about my marriage and I didn't give a damn about a movie. I wanted my life! And with all that I was going through, to have put her life over mine, I might've died. I don't regret not doing her story. I regret that the people who did it didn't have enough respect to pay homage to this queen. They treated her life like it was fiction."

It's a shame Abbey never played Billie. Not only is the sound of her voice similar to Billie's but she's the most dramatic jazz singer since Billie. "I'm her spiritual relative. When I first heard Billie, she went right to my soul. She was honest. She didn't garnish anything. She sang her heart. Billie inherited from Bessie [Smith], and I inherited from Billie. When I came to the stage, I was not alone. I didn't have to chart a course. It was there. All these great women—Sarah Vaughan, Lena Horne, Rosemary Cloo-

ney—and Frank Sinatra, Nat Cole. There were many great singers, and they were great because they were original, but Billie Holiday was the only one who was social. She sang about things that others didn't sing about. 'God Bless The Child' is the truth!" *Abbey Sings Billie*, an Enja release from a 1987 concert at Universal Jazz Coalition, is her testament to Billie (see "Reviews" Jan. '91). A second volume will come eventually.

Abbey didn't act again until 1990, in the Spike Lee picture *Mo' Better Blues*. She played the young trumpeter's mean mother.

*"When I first heard Billie,
she went right to my soul.
She was honest. She didn't
garnish anything. She sang
her heart. Billie inherited
from Bessie, and I inherited
from Billie."*



"I didn't think she was a villain. I thought my husband was a villain, because he didn't have any spine and let this boy do anything he wanted to do. Spike lied. It was supposed to be about John Coltrane. That's what I signed for, *A Love Supreme*, but it had nothing to do with John's life. Spike had a chance with me in the film. If this boy's mother had been a singer, you could understand her interest in him being on stage. There's no talk about how she died or if she died. It wasn't the story of a great musician. I never did see it."

Miles Davis and many others encouraged Abbey through the '70s and '80s. She traveled. She sang. David Collyer became her voice teacher, and nowadays the range and strength of her voice is greater than ever before. "David taught me what the instrument is. He centered everything for me physically. He gave me exercises to loosen up my body. I learned that also from Miriam Makeba. She took me to Africa on vacation

and I watched this woman dance and carry on stage."

Yet another name came to Abbey while in Africa: Aminata Moseka. "Aminata and Moseka are gods. It's my African name, my offering to my African ancestors. I thank them for my life. All these names that were given to me are mine, and they're all one person. Anna Maria was a French queen. France is somehow important to me. I have a French producer now, Jean-Philippe Allard."

Allard produced her first American albums in years. "He doesn't say I should do more standards. He says I should do what I do." *The World Is Falling Down* features original songs and her lyrics to the music of Charlie Haden and Thad Jones, also French lyrics to "How High The Moon." Ron Carter arranged, with solos from Clark Terry and Jackie McLean. *You Gotta Pay The Band* is more of the same, and even better, including a haunting "Brother, Can You Spare A Dime?" that Billie might've sung. Abbey is joined on several songs by her step-daughter Maxine Roach playing viola, with pianist Hank Jones, bassist Charlie Haden, drummer Mark Johnson, and some of the last and best playing of Stan Getz.

"I asked for Stan, and Stan said yes. It wouldn't have been the same without Stan. One time he was perspiring, and I could see he was in pain, but by the end of the day he was rejuvenated. I decided to do 'And How I Hoped For Your Love' as a bossa because of Stan. That he was on it made it sweet. When we recorded 'When I'm Called Home,' I knew he was passing."

You Gotta Pay The Band is also the title of a new video to be aired this February on PBS during Black History Month. "It's a documentary of my life. I'm getting the chance to tell my story while I'm still alive." And what's most obvious is that Abbey Lincoln is very happy with her life. "I've found my way. I've finally made my point. Everybody is somebody and I'm the product of my ancestors, of my mother and father who taught me how to be. I am not destroyed. I live!"

*Bird alone, flying low,
over where the grasses grow,
swinging low, then out of sight,
you'll be singing in the night!*

DB

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader

YOU GOTTA PAY THE BAND—Verve 511 110
THE WORLD IS FALLING DOWN—Verve 843 476
ABBEY SINGS BILLIE—Enja 79633
TALKING TO THE SUN—Enja 79635
PEOPLE IN ME—ITM 1439
STRAIGHT AHEAD—Candid 79015
ABBEY IS BLUE—Riverside OJC-069

IT'S MAGIC—Riverside OJC-205
THAT'S HIM—Riverside OJC-085

with Max Roach

WE INSIST FREEDOM NOW SUITE—Candid 79002
IT'S TIME—Impulse WMC5-121 (Japanese)

with Frank Morgan

A LOVESOME THING—Antilles 422-848-213

Cringe Of The Lone Wolf

DEWEY REDMAN

By Howard Mandel



LONA FOOTE

Dewey Redman is a grizzled saxophone eminence, and at the dress rehearsal for "Dewey's Circle"—the recent Lincoln Center celebration of his career—he was as erratic as a wolf driven into the spotlight. Pacing the perimeter of a Juilliard School practice room, muttering to

himself, signifyin' over-emphatically to some invited journalists and his longtime pals Don Cherry and Ed Blackwell while sporadically running down a freebop head, Redman embodied the title of his most recent, hard-to-find Black Saint album, *Living On The Edge*.

Rob Gibson, Lincoln Center jazz program

director and concert producer, was sorely tried and swearing to let off steam out of the musicians' hearing range, before trying again to get Redman settled on a set list and rehearsal plan. At least Dewey was *there*; Charlie Haden—fourth member of the harmonic Old And New Dreams quartet reconvened for the concert—could not be found. Bassist Cameron Brown arrived on schedule to practice with Dewey's other band, but Paul Motian forgot his drumsticks and improvised with two light, flat slats of wood. Pianists Geri Allen and Charles Eubanks were prepared; tenor saxist Joshua Redman—Dewey's son and 1991 winner of the Thelonious Monk Competition—had buried his nose in Milan Kundera's book, *The Unbearable Lightness Of Being*.

"Anything to distract from *this*," 21-year-old Joshua said, nodding with a pained look in his father's direction. A summa cum laude Harvard grad, already accepted by Yale and considering law school, Joshua debuted last spring with Dewey's band at the Village Vanguard. He loves to play and has good command of his horn, but fears that jazz is an undependable profession.

"I've never seen my dad so bad," Joshua said, deeply concerned. "We haven't talked much for a month. Did something happen?"

Nothing worse had happened to the elder Redman than being granted center stage by a prestigious institution after years spent as a collaborator and sideman desirous of just such an opportunity and recognition.

A multi-reedist who started on clarinet, Dewey has stalked the periphery of listener's attention since the early '50s, when he carried a horn to Austin-area dances and jam sessions just to get in for free. Born in Fort Worth, Texas, and having learned fundamentals in high school and college (Prairie View A&M), he studied the nuances of technique by watching how dance-band saxophonists held their instruments, addressed their mouthpieces, laid their fingers. He'd had "this bug about music, even when I was a very young guy—seven, eight, nine, 10 years old," Dewey has recalled. "The first house I lived in was across from this joint that had a loud jukebox, and I used to sit in my yard, listening to the same tunes over and over for hours. I listened a long time

before I started to play.”

If Redman’s career direction was inevitable, his progress toward it was unhurried. After school and an army stint, he became a full-time teacher in Bastrop, Texas, sitting in whenever he could with “blues-slash-bop bands.” Early on a fervent admirer of Johnny Hodges and Earl Bostic, only later becoming a Charlie Parker fan, when Dewey switched from alto to tenor he took Stan Getz, Dexter Gordon, and especially Gene Ammons as influences. Internally, he mixed pride in his skills with unfathomable reluctance to test himself.

“ . . . at age 29 I decided to go to New York. And I told myself if I didn’t make it in five years, I’d go back to Texas. It didn’t work out like that. I’ve been trying ever since.”



“I was listening to all these records and I said, ‘Shoot, I can play that.’ It came into my mind that I didn’t want to get older and older and never try to be a jazz musician. It took me a couple of years to make up my mind, but at age 29 I decided to go to New York. And I told myself if I didn’t make it in five years, I’d go back to Texas. It didn’t work out like that. I’ve been trying ever since.”

Dewey got to the Apple via a visit to Los Angeles and a seven-year stay in San Francisco. Once in New York, he called a hometown friend who’d made it big.

“Ornette Coleman and I are friends, always have been, still are,” Redman said. “I’ve always been into Ornette’s music—I knew him when he first started playin’. When I got to New York he was in a hiatus, but he had a loft on Prince Street and he’d say, ‘Bring your horn over, man.’ I brought my horn, and would be fiddlin’ with it, and he’d say, ‘Well, you’re here, so. . . .’ He’d write out a tune, and I’d go over it; then he’d write another tune, and I’d go over that. . . . When Ornette came out of his hiatus, the first gig I had was with him and Denardo [Coleman’s son, then a 12-year-old drummer] and [bassist] David Izenzon. Later, Blackwell came into the band, and Charlie [Haden]. Don was living in Europe then, but played with us a couple times, once at NYU



Dewey in performance with bassist Cameron Brown at Lincoln Center

LONA FOOTE

[New York University].” That performance was issued by Impulse! as *Crisis*.

Redman had already recorded an album under his own name with San Francisco drummer Eddie Moore, eventually released as *Look To The Black Star*. Coleman featured Redman on the 1968 Blue Note sessions for *New York Is Now!* and *Love Call*, with John Coltrane’s rhythm team of Jimmy Garrison and Elvin Jones. Dewey’s grainy, long, twisting tenor phrases contrasted with Ornette’s piercing, clipped alto articulations; his distinctive growls, groans, and cries, his subtly constructed, resolute, and finally incisive solos, and his quietly commanding presence supported Coleman’s radicalism on *Science Fiction* and *Broken Shadows*.

Redman added depth and heft to pianist Keith Jarrett’s quartet albums of the ’70s as well.

“Keith Jarrett is a fantastic musician, but Ornette is a genius, and I consider myself having gone to the University of Ornette because I learned so much—about space, phrasing; how not to be caught up in conventional things, but to appreciate them, too,” Dewey said. “Like changes: changes are *okay*, but I’m not to be limited by them. And not to be limited in my scope.”

These lessons—and the higher profile the tenorist had gained working with Coleman and Jarrett—resulted in Dewey’s unique but overlooked albums *Ear Of The Behearer* and *Coincide*, recorded by Impulse! in ’73 and

'74, respectively (and yet to be reissued). His unusually dramatic structures—interpreted with elegant timbral and tonal detail by trumpeter Ted Daniel, either violinist Leroy Jenkins or cellist Jane Robertson, bassist Sirone, and drummer Moore—were apparently beyond consumers. Dewey won't discuss those efforts now, and in subsequent albums has generally reverted to less experimental formats.

Still, Redman's music remains identifiably his own and exemplifies values of 50 years of jazz—that's why Lincoln Center was moved to celebrate him in the first place. There lingers in his sound on alto an echo of Hodges' yearning glisses, of Bird's heedless leaps, of Ornette's radar penetration. Dewey's tenor is a unique voice, mingling inflections from gruff Texas, blue Chicago, and cool California. In his most unfettered expressions, Dewey vents flinty humor, dry sarcasm, and choked rage, bearing through all the pain a heart of rare, vulnerable beauty. Perhaps to protect his naked lyricism, he poses as ironic and self-deprecating, or retreats into a fog of substance abuse. He's tended to flee close scrutiny by offering something less than his best on the most auspicious occasions.

"We just came off two weeks on the road across Canada with Dewey, and he was fine," reported Jane Bunnett, the soprano saxist with whom Redman recently recorded *In Dew Time*. "Maybe leading a band, though, is heavy for him. I wouldn't know why."

Redman seldom bared his fangs and revealed only glimpses of his true soul during his Lincoln Center concert. His best moments unwound on musette, in sync with Blackwell's deliberate African-American dances. On sax, Dewey responded to the steady attentions of Geri Allen and Cameron Brown, and Motian's propulsion. He blew in good form following a boldly forthright solo by his son, but the Old And New Dreams reunion was uninspired.

"The concert was okay—it wasn't all it might have been, but it was okay," Redman said several days after Lincoln Center's "Dewey's Circle." Or, as he'd said months before, shrugging in the overcoat he wore during an interview in a well-heated kitchen, "Some nights you have good nights and some nights you don't." The night before that interview, he'd performed a relatively satisfying, much lower-pressure Knitting Factory gig.

"My technique isn't always what I want it to be, and my sidemen might play too loud. But it's a strange thing, man: sometimes when you think you've played your ass off, people look at you like you're crazy. And then sometimes when you played the worst solo ever, people say, 'Wow! What a great

solo that was!'"

On a "good" night—often in the company of younger musicians like Joshua or Geri Allen (with whom he toured remote venues last spring for the New York State Council on the Arts), Bunnett and her trumpeter/husband Larry Kramer, bassists Anthony Cox and Mark Helias, and drummer Pheeroan akLaff—Dewey will begin "When You Wish Upon A Star" and segue with wry perspective into "Everything Happens To Me."

Redman's ballad renditions conflate Coleman Hawkins' authority with Lester Young's offhandedness; he interprets Miles Davis' "Half Nelson" as freebop, first gripping, then ripping, then resolving. Dewey will occasionally dip into a wide-ranging, tradition-skimming repertoire: Ornette's "Una Muy Bonita," "When Will The Blues Leave," or "Law Years"; Ellington's "Rockin' In Rhythm" or "Purple Gazelle" or "Azure"; a tune by Monk, something new by Chicagoan Ed Wilkerson ("One of my favorite arranger/composer/musicians"), or something older but much too unknown of his own.

Dewey will walk on musette, then break into ranting glossalalia, stomping his feet and making shaman moves. He stiffens the spine of Carla Bley's charts in Haden's Liberation Music Orchestra and serves as a challenging mentor to Joe Lovano. In Chicago for a week, he leads a no-nonsense combo with pianist Jodie Christian, bassist Harrison Bankhead, and drummer Hamid Drake. Great Britain's arts council commissioned his sextet of alto, tenor, trombone,

trumpet, bass, and drums; and now Dewey hopes to extend those charts for eight or nine pieces.

"That's a new experience for me," he said proudly, "because the format I choose for myself is usually a quartet. When I was a kid, the thing I admired and enjoyed most was seeing a saxophone player with a good rhythm section. That was heaven, never thinking I would be in New York and have a good rhythm section with me." He shook his head in wonder.

"To wear all those hats at once, to play a little avant garde—or avant bop—then a little bebop, and a little blues, musette, this here, that there," Redman explained, "to make it all come out clean, that's very difficult to do. Some musicians dabble in it, say they're multidirectional, but . . .," he trailed off. "I try to make every facet of my playing strong. I try to make each one distinct, and clear. But that's very difficult to do."

It is hard, as everyone who's tried it knows. It's an uphill fight, to maintain one's artistic integrity. It's tough simply to survive, any veteran musician will tell you. The struggle continues, as Dewey titled his '82 ECM album. There is much honor in accomplishing what he has—in making the transition from Texas amateur to world-renowned artist, however long it's taken. The lone wolf may cringe at the spotlight's glare, so let him make his own way forward. Right now, consider his triumphs and failings as twined aspects of complexity. That much, and more, is Dewey Redman's due. **DB**

EQUIPMENT

Dewey plays a Selmer Mark VI tenor saxophone with a Berg-Larsen 90/2 hard-rubber mouthpiece and Prestini #4 tenor and #3½ alto reeds. In addition, he plays a Selmer alto with a mouth-

piece so old the name has worn off. Dewey also uses a Buffet clarinet and a musette he bought in San Francisco.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader

- IN DEW TIME—Denon 24001
- LIVING ON THE EDGE—Black Saint 120-123
- IN WILLISAU—Black Saint 120-093
- THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES—ECM 1-1225*
- SOUND SIGNS—Galaxy 5130
- MUSICS—Galaxy 5118
- TARIK—Affinity 42*
- COINCIDE—Impulse 9300*
- THE EAR OF THE BEHEARER—Impulse 9250*
- LOOK FOR THE BLACK STAR—Arista/Freedom 1011*

with Old And New Dreams

- TRIBUTE TO BLACKWELL—Black Saint 120-113
- OLD AND NEW DREAMS—ECM 829 379-2
- PLAYING—ECM 829 123-2
- OLD AND NEW DREAMS—Black Saint 120-013

with Ornette Coleman

- SCIENCE FICTION—Columbia KC 31061*
- BROKEN SHADOWS—Columbia FC 38029*
- FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS—Flying Dutchman*
- LOVE CALL—Blue Note 84356
- NEW YORK IS NOW!—Blue Note 84287
- CRISIS—Impulse 9187*
- ORNETTE AT 12—Impulse 9178*

with Pat Metheny

- 80/81—ECM 843 169-2

with Keith Jarrett

- EYES OF THE HEART—ECM 825 476-2
- THE SURVIVOR'S SUITE—ECM 827 131-2
- BOP-BE—Impulse 29048*
- BYBLUE—Impulse 29047*
- DEATH AND THE FLOWER—Impulse 29046*
- TREASURE ISLAND—Impulse 39106
- FORT YAUUH—Impulse 33122
- SHADES—Impulse 9322*
- MYSTERIES—Impulse 33113
- EL JUICIO—Atlantic 1673*
- BIRTH—Atlantic 1612
- EXPECTATIONS—Columbia CK 46866

with Charlie Haden

- LIBERATION MUSIC ORCHESTRA—Impulse 39125
- BALLAD OF THE FALLEN—ECM 811 546
- DREAM KEEPER—Blue Note 7 95474

with Billy Hart

- ENCHANCE—A&M Horizon 75021-0818-2

with Jazz Composers Orchestra

- RELATIVITY SUITE—JCOA 1006*
- NUMATIK SWING BAND—JCOA 1007*
- THE GARDENS OF HARLEM—JCOA 1008*
- FOR PLAYERS ONLY—JCOA 1010*

*out of print in U.S.

JASS RECORD #1

ORIGINAL DIXIELAND JAZZ BAND

By John McDonough

There have been something like 325,000 jazz performances recorded for commercial release in this century. And billions more have been sold.

Wipe all those billions from your mind, however, and imagine, if you can, the world 75 years ago when only *one* jazz record existed. It contained two songs, "Livery Stable Blues" and "Dixie Jass Band One-Step," on each side of a Victor 78 and was the work of a group of white musicians that called itself the Original Dixieland Jazz Band.

This month, these historic performances are out again for the first time in a quarter century in a Diamond Jubilee edition by RCA/Bluebird.

There is honor in being first, particularly when it amounts to something. And this is what makes these ODJB records important. They have little else going for them. They certainly don't constitute the "invention" of jazz, as the band's cornetist Nick LaRocca liked to say. All that can be said on that touchy topic is largely lost to history. Whoever created jazz is among civilization's unknown soldiers.

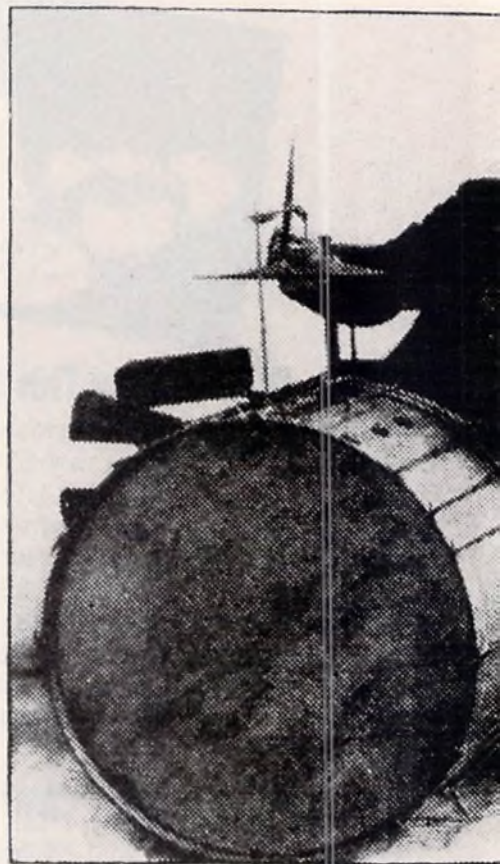
In the New Orleans of 1916, musicians, white and black, were playing jazz in local

opened in Chicago.

When the band was a hit, the musicians concluded they were underpaid. Stein might have seized history at this point, demanded more money from management, and saved his group. But having no idea that history was at stake in this wage dispute, Stein demanded nothing. So his one shot at immortality turned irretrievably to LaRocca, who persuaded trombonist Eddie Edwards and pianist Henry Ragas to quit Stein and follow him. Tony Sbarbaro soon joined on drums and Larry Shields on clarinet. By November the charter membership was in place. And the Original Dixieland Jazz Band was poised for a date with fate at Victor that would move jazz from ephemera to inscription.

It was not the invention of jazz that gave it significance. It was the intervention of technological leverage. Had jazz stayed in New Orleans, the language of American music might sound much different today. That it eventually reached New York and got recorded marks the beginning of its real history and its impact on American music.

LaRocca and his men introduced a trunk full of numbers in New York that are still



in New York. So when LaRocca said he wrote them all, who was there to say otherwise? When he got away with that, he went for the big deal of the day. He said he invented jazz.

It wasn't exactly the great train robbery, however. Jazz had no known market value in 1917. The future of jazz had no certainties about it, not even spelling. ("Jass" and "jaz" appeared in a *New York Times* ad.) Was it a fad? The wave of the future? Nobody could put a price tag on it.

The first company to try was Columbia Records, which rushed the ODJB into its studio 12 days after its opening. Two pop tunes were cut in the Woolworth Building on January 20, 1917 ("Dark Town Strutters Ball" and "Indiana"). But it sounded so raucous and distorted, the company wanted nothing to do with it. So the five musicians were paid a total of \$250 for their efforts and sent walking. The masters were squirreled away, and that was that.

So the privilege of launching the history of recorded jazz moved a few blocks across Manhattan to the Victor Talking Machine Company. Three and a half weeks after the Columbia debacle, the ODJB recorded two originals, "Livery Stable Blues" and "Dixie Jass Band One-Step." Victor released the records on March 1, and they quickly be-



The ODJB ham it up backstage at a reunion, circa 1936

bands. One of them was a barrel-chested bull of a cornetist who played in a band led by Johnny Stein: Dominic James LaRocca—Nick for short. He was the sort of man who could sell anything but usually preferred selling himself. On March 1, 1916, "Stein's Band from Dixie," with LaRocca on cornet,

heard at traditional jazz festivals today: "Tiger Rag," "Clarinet Marmalade," "Sensation Rag," "At The Jazz Band Ball," "Fidgety Feet," "Dixieland One Step," and more. Most had been kicking around New Orleans for years in a kind of shared local repertoire of vague authorship. But no one knew that



The Original Dixieland Jazz Band: Tony Sbarbaro, Eddie Edwards, Nick LaRocca, Larry Shields, and Henry Ragas

came a national sensation. By May, Columbia finally decided that its January records were releasable after all.

To some today, it may seem as if history has conspired to cheat black culture of a milestone event. How else could it be that a *white* band, not a black one, should get all the credit for putting the first "black music" on record? A minority of revisionists have proposed replacing the ODJB with black orchestra leader James Reese Europe, who recorded in 1913—a notion that has come to nothing. Others have said the ODJB didn't play jazz at all, but ragtime. Thus the mantle can be passed to Kid Ory, the black trombonist who first recorded in 1922.

The ODJB's music was more shock than substance. It launched the band in a blaze of excitement and sensation, and six years later no one would record it. But it served an historic purpose superbly well. By substituting "sheer energy for expressive power," Gunther Schuller wrote in *Early Jazz* (Oxford University Press), it "found the key to mass appeal." Shock was exactly what jazz needed to crash the Victorian walls of American culture.

The reaction was swift. "Moral disaster

is coming to hundreds of young girls," warned one moral vigilante group, "through the pathological, sex-exciting music of jazz orchestras." If you're tempted to snicker at such quaintness, don't be so quick to patronize. What few realized yet in 1917 was how such mass-produced iconoclasm helped precipitate a sense that art and morality had certain hidden and subversive cultural linkages. Jazz was an aspect of the larger canvas of 20th-century modernism under which we still live, and therefore part of a growing tension between settled "traditional" values and the skepticism of urbanity and inquiry. And if art—be it dixieland, cubism, or Robert Mapplethorpe—menaces our moral fiber, then "the state has the same right to protect its citizens from deadly art as it has to prohibit the carrying of deadly weapons." That's what the National Educational Association said in 1921. And many are still saying it in 1992.

The ODJB quickly lost its menace and sensation, and the culture cops went on to find other devils. After the release of the first two Victor sides, the band spent 16 months in England. Returning to America in 1920, it never recovered its momentum. The ODJB made its last important records in 1923—the same year Louis Armstrong made his first. There would be an encore in

the middle '30s and a final valedictory at Victor to remake their old tunes. But the band was unable to sustain a full-time career. In the middle of the swing era, it seemed a relic. The last glint of the ODJB on record was a pair of 1945-'46 Commodore sessions that included only Eddie Edwards and Tony Sbarbaro. One by one the old members retired, then died. Larry Shields was the first to go in 1953, and LaRocca died at 71 in 1961. The only original member to live to see the 50th anniversary reissue of the first Victor sides was the youngest, Tony Sbarbaro. He died two years later at 72.

For 75 years, records have captured a wisp of an art, made it immutable, and let it multiply in the human spirit. Records have made possible jazz repertory orchestras. They allow young musicians to embrace Louis Armstrong, Lester Young, Charlie Christian, Benny Goodman, Charlie Parker, and John Coltrane not as icons but as teachers. Records are a check against the monopoly of the present over the past, of banality over brilliance. When the Original Dixieland Jazz Band recorded in 1917, jazz was no longer a music of the moment. It became a museum of moments in which records will forever hold the future of jazz accountable to the greatest achievements of its past. **DB**

Edging Back From Chaos

TOM HARRELL

By Zan Stewart

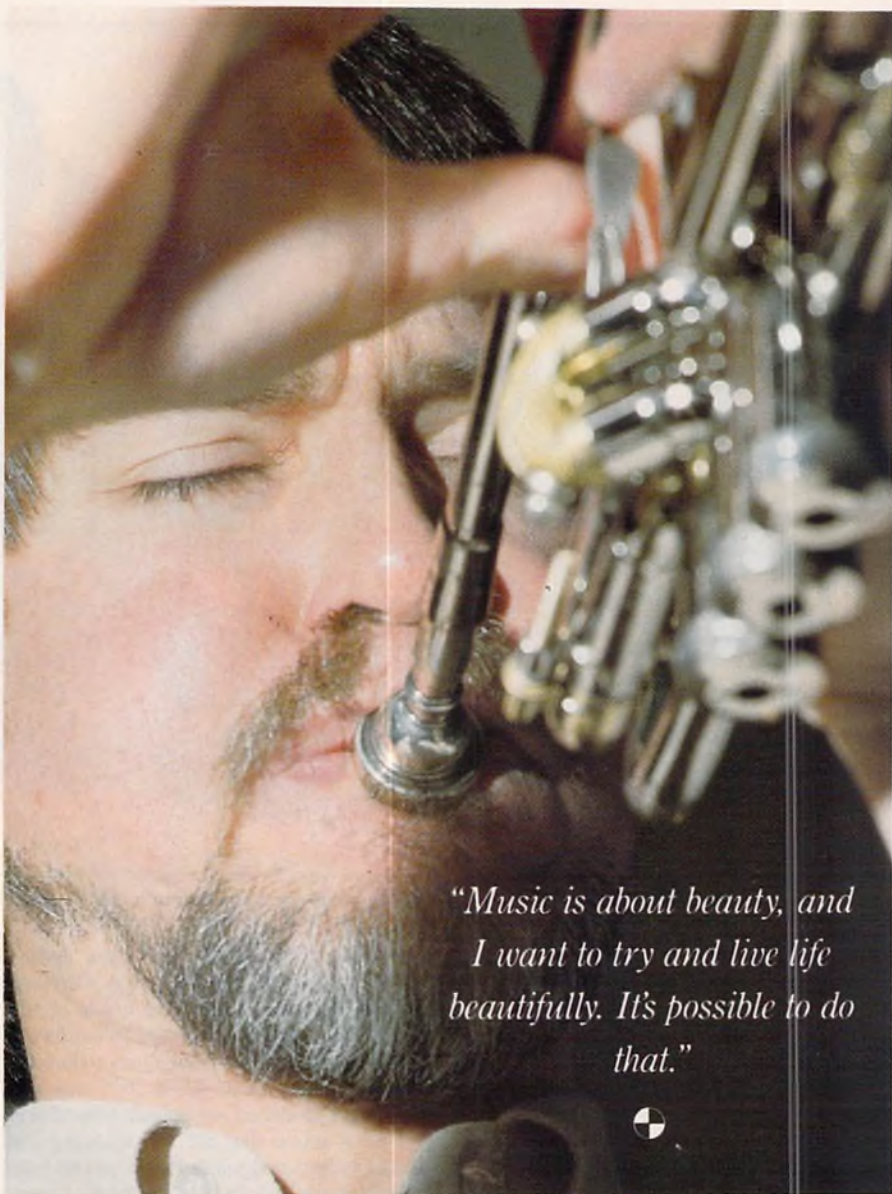
Typical of the breadth and command of trumpeter Tom Harrell's exhilarating style is his solo on "Brazilian Song," a blazing, samba-Latinesque piece heard on his 1990 release, *Form*. On this peppy original, Harrell roars, letting go with breakneck aural volleys that turn and twist like a bobsled team hurtling down an icy run. He jumps from crisp arpeggios and smart interval leaps to brief, repeated bluesy phrases and screaming high tones, selecting the choicest notes despite the heated pace, delivering it all with a tone as gleaming as a polished stainless-steel ball.

It's true that Harrell—who has toured and recorded with Phil Woods, Horace Silver, and Woody Herman—is an extremely talented jazzman who has coupled his extraordinary gifts with plain hard work and is now reaping rewards for his efforts.

It's also true that Harrell's saddled with some very heavy emotional baggage. The 45-year-old native of Urbana, Illinois, who grew up in Palo Alto on the San Francisco peninsula, suffers from severe mental illness. Whether Harrell is, in clinical terms, schizophrenic (as he was diagnosed in 1986), borderline schizophrenic (as was suggested in a 1968 assessment), or simply paranoid (as per an evaluation earlier this year) is not clear.

But whatever the name of his ailment, it manifests itself in powerful ways. The 1969 Stanford U. graduate (with a degree in composition) frankly admits he sometimes hears voices (or thinks he does), has off-and-on bouts of deep depression, and is not easily coaxed out of his studio apartment on Manhattan's Upper West Side (where he's lived since 1975) for social reasons. To help him cope, the musician takes a daily dose of the potent tranquilizer Stelazine.

The tall, lean artist takes his problems seriously. But he also has that saving grace—



"Music is about beauty, and I want to try and live life beautifully. It's possible to do that."

a sense of humor—to temper things. "My paranoia gets pretty outrageous sometimes," he says with a chuckle during a recent series of conversations.

In the face of debilitations that have kept many in insitutions, or in mundane occupations, Tom Harrell mounts a courageous assault. This brave man, who inspires admiration, respect, and compassion, steadfastly charges ahead, seeking—and attaining—the rarefied air of high art.

"I want to put myself on the edge," he says in a scratchy, whispery manner that's his usual speaking voice. "I love that feeling where I'm taking risks and doing things that I've never done before that are musically valid. That's really exciting."

The musicians who attest to Harrell's prowess are legion. Two are Phil Woods and drummer Bill Goodwin.

"He's the finest jazz improviser today," says the alto wizard, with whom the trumpeter toured and recorded from 1983 to 1988.

"There's something about Tom more than he has great time, plays great notes, and knows and feels so much about music. There's an indefinable quality," says drummer Goodwin, who has played with Tom for over 15 years—including in Woods' band—and has produced many of Harrell's albums. Goodwin is also a member of the trumpeter's new quintet, which just recorded its debut disc, *Passages*, for the Chesky label, with Goodwin handling dual roles of trapsman and booth-man.

The number of players who call on Harrell for musical expertise is growing, too. In the final three months of 1991, the artist did a concert with tenorman Joe Lovano at Mer-

kin Hall in New York City, worked with pianist James Williams' quintet (which included Ron Carter, Louis Hayes, and Javon Jackson) in Boston, traveled to Europe with altoist Jim Snidero, where he also played with guitarist Philip Catherine and pianist Kenny Werner, and went to Los Angeles with Charlie Haden's Liberation Music Orchestra (see "Caught" Dec. '91). During the same period he recorded with Werner for Sunnyside, with Snidero for Ken, with guitarist Danny Gattton for Blue Note, and with trumpeter John Swana and tenorist Don Braden, both for Criss Cross. To several of these sessions he contributed original compositions.

In between all this activity, the perseverant Harrell has made some noise on his own. He led a quintet—with pianist Danilo Perez, bassist Peter Washington, Lovano, and Goodwin—for two nights at Visiones in Greenwich Village, then took the same band, plus percussionist Cafe, into the studio to make *Passages* in November. And while on the West Coast with Haden, he played a one-nighter at Catalina Bar & Grill, backed by pianist Billy Childs, bassist Tony Dumas, and drummer Ralph Penland.

And there's more. He returned to Europe with Snidero in January, plans to go to Europe with Haden in April, and looks to have his band playing at the summer festivals, both in the U.S. and Europe. He also plans to continue his relationship with Swiss altoist George Robert. The two are spotlighted on *Sundance* on Contemporary, and will be heard on three tracks on *Visions*, an anthology of Harrell material due out shortly on the same Bay Area-based label.

Harrell's goal—"I just want to keep working, composing, and practicing, so I can continue to grow"—seems to be in sharp focus. The trumpeter/composer, who grew up hearing big band music on his parent's phonograph, and was playing with Bay Area jazz bands by his mid-teens, was always clear about his life's ambitions—he just wasn't able to realize them. He now says the tenure with Woods, which he describes as a remarkable growth experience, helped him get on track.

"I learned so much from Phil, who has always been one of my idols," says Harrell. "He allowed me the freedom to write whatever I wanted, so I learned to trust my intuition more. And I found out more about my own capabilities, that I could work harder in terms of traveling, that it was possible to push myself and be more active. And he helped me to find the direction I wanted to go in, which was to work from bebop and try to extend that tradition."

Harrell said he left Woods' band simply because he wanted to do something with his own group, and explore his writing. And he's

done that, spending a good deal of his time—if he's not performing—writing and practicing in his apartment.

He attempts to let his songs—which range from Latin cookers and dusky ballads to charged straight-ahead numbers and tunes with hardly any structure at all—tell their own story.

"I often start with whatever I'm hearing at the moment," he says, "and I try to write it down, even if it's only a fragment. I like to let the ideas unfold in a natural way, though sometimes I may push to try and expand something in a logical way. But if nothing comes, I put it aside. I did that today, came back to something I started three years ago.

"I always try to write what feels best, write what has the most emotional impact, what feels good in the moment, the way it sounds," he adds.

The creator of such resilient tunes as "The Water's Edge," "Bouquet," and "Scene" often writes at his old Fender Rhodes, but for inspiration he'll occasionally go to rehearsal studios in Manhattan and plop down in front of an acoustic grand piano, occasionally with horn at the ready. "There's a certain magic that can happen when you voice a chord and then play trumpet notes on top," he says. "Or unisons between horn and piano, that's a great sound, too."

Harrell tries to practice about four hours a day, with plenty of emphasis on technical studies. He often works out of H. L. Clarke's *Technical Studies Book No. 2* and Charlier's *Etudes Transcendantes*.

"I practice a lot of single-note tonguing because that helps my accuracy, and helps me focus on each note, especially if I'm practicing wide intervals," he says. "I also



blow over changes and tunes, sometimes transposing a song into different keys. If something is giving me trouble, I'll make a vamp out of it and play it over and over."

Ultimately, Harrell knows that he must leave his domain and share his music with an audience. "Playing for people and reaching them is what gives music validity," he says. "It makes it a giving and receiving process. When you play, the audience gives back energy, which makes it a complete cycle."

Tom Harrell sees his life as one that's in process, where there is substantial growth. "I'm more creative now than I was 20 years ago," he says. "I feel I'm less afraid to take chances, musically, and I want to apply those lessons of music to life. Music is about beauty and I want to try and live life beautifully. It's possible to do that." **DB**

EQUIPMENT

Tom Harrell plays a Conn Constellation model 38B trumpet that was given to him by Alan Colin, son of Dr. Charles Colin of the Colin Music Studios in Manhattan. The horn varies slightly from the Conn 36B Harrell used for over 20 years. He employs a Bach Megatone 1½ mouthpiece that has been bored out. "That gives me a darker sound," he says. Harrell plays a Couesnon flugelhorn given to him in San Francisco in 1972 by Verne Thompson, "who used to be a disc jockey on KJAZ," the Bay Area's commercial jazz FM outlet. On the flugelhorn, he plays a Bach 1½ FL mouthpiece. He owns a Fender Rhodes 88-key model that he uses for keyboard practice and composing.

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SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

(See **DB** Oct. 1985 for a listing of earlier releases.)

as a leader

PASSAGES—Chesky JD64
VISIONS—Contemporary 14063
FORM—Contemporary 14069
SAIL AWAY—Contemporary 14054
STORIES—Contemporary 14043
SUNDANCE—Contemporary 14037 (co-led with George Robert)
OPEN AIR—Sleepchase 31220
MOON ALLEY—Criss Cross 1018
PLAY OF LIGHT—Blackhawk 50901

with Phil Woods

REAL LIFE—Chesky JD47
FLASH—Concord Jazz 4408
BOUQUET—Concord Jazz 4377
EVOLUTION—Concord Jazz 4361

with various others

DREAM KEEPER—Blue Note 7 95474 (w/ Charlie Haden)
FEELIN' AND DEALIN'—Criss Cross 1046 (w/ Ralph Lalama)
PEOPLE MUSIC—Muse 5406 (w/ Donald Brown)
FIFTH HOUSE—Concord Jazz 4413 (w/ Allan Farnham)
WORKOUT!—Criss Cross 1037 (w/ Greg Marvin)
I THINK WE'RE ALMOST THERE—Discovery 924 (w/ Charlie Shoemake)

Key

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



Max Roach

TO THE MAX!—Bluemoon R2 79164: *GHOST DANCE (Pt. 1)*, *GHOST DANCE*; *GHOST DANCE (Pt. 2)*, *GLORIOUS MONSTER*; *GHOST DANCE (Pt. 3)*, *GHOST DANCE*; *A QUIET PLACE*; *THE PROFIT*; *TEARS*; *SELF PORTRAIT*; *A LITTLE BOOKER*; *STREET DANCE*; *TRICOTISM*; *MWALIMU*; *DRUMS UNLIMITED*. (49:12/50:56)

Personnel: Max Roach Quartet: Roach, drums, percussion; Odean Pope, tenor sax; Cecil Bridgewater, trumpet; Tyrone Brown, bass; Uptown String Quartet: Lesa Terry, Diane Monroe, violin; Maxine Roach, viola; Eileen Folsom, cello; George Cables, piano; John Motley Singers: Priscilla Baskerville, Florence Jackson, Karen Jackson, Lucille J. Jacobsen, Sarah Ann Rodgers, Robbin L. Ballour, Brenda Lee Taub, Christopher Pickens, Abraham Shelton, Thomas Young, James Gainer, Greg Jones, T. Ray Lawrence, John Motley, Ronnell Bey, vocals; M'Boom Roy Brooks, Joe Chambers, Omar Clay, Eli Fountain, Fred King, Ray Mantilla, Francisco Mora, Warren Smith, various percussion.

★★★★★

At first glance, Max Roach's *To The Max!* threatens to be an impossibly unwieldy, though ambitious, project: On this two-CD set, drummer, percussionist, and composer Roach performs with a vocal chorus, a string quartet, a percussion ensemble, and his jazz quartet (as separate ensembles and as one metaensemble), and as a soloist. But because Max Roach is a master of his art, this project succeeds.

The magic of Roach's music lies in the swinginess of his grooves. Where the addition of a string quartet or a vocal ensemble to a jazz quartet could sound stilted, Roach makes it work. The Uptown String Quartet adds texture and harmonic tension to "A Little Booker," and the John Motley Singers contribute bebopish lines and soaring harmonies to "Ghost Dance," a grand 30-minute work performed by the entire ensemble (the vocalists,

Max Roach Quartet, Uptown String Quartet, and M'Boom). Roach's impressionistic lyrics, based on a Native American theme, convey a spiritual message, especially during soloist Ronnell Bey's impassioned interpretation.

The remainder of the album represents post-bop jazz in the hands of an originator. With trumpeter Cecil Bridgewater's inventive solos, saxophonist Odean Pope's fervent chordal shadings, and Tyrone Brown's buoyant bass lines, Roach's quartet sounds fresh and energetic while remaining steeped, firsthand, in tradition. Tradition, too, informs M'Boom's subtle yet powerful collective improvisations and invigorates Roach's solo spots, where his bouncing, swaying rhythms are a pure, joyous sound, full of hope and life. (reviewed on CD)

—Suzanne McElfresh



Teddy Edwards

MISSISSIPPI LAD—Antilles 314-511 411-2: *LITTLE MAN*; *SAFARI WALK*; *THE BLUE SOMBRERO*; *MISSISSIPPI LAD*; *THREE BASE HIT*; *I'M NOT YOUR FOOL ANYMORE*; *SYMPHONY ON CENTRAL*; *BALLAD FOR A BRONZE BEAUTY*; *THE CALL OF LOVE*. (57:48)

Personnel: Edwards, tenor sax; Nolan Smith, trumpet; Jimmy Cleveland, trombone; Art Hillery, piano; Leroy Vinnegar, bass; Billy Higgins, drums; Ray Armando, percussion; Tom Waits, vocals, guitar (cuts 1,6).

★★★★½

GOOD GRAY!—Contemporary/OJCCD-661-2: *GOOD GRAY!*; *COULD YOU FORGET?*; *A STAIRWAY TO THE STARS*; *A LITTLE LATER*; *ON GREEN DOLPHIN STREET*; *JUST FRIENDS*; *LAURA*; *YES, I'LL BE READY*; *NOT SO STRANGE*. (41:19)

Personnel: Edwards, tenor sax; Pineas Newborn, Jr., piano (4,5); Danny Horton, piano (1-3, 6-9); Leroy Vinnegar, bass; Milt Turner, drums.

★★★★★

Though he's seldom strayed far from his home in Los Angeles, it's still astonishing that a tenor titan like Teddy Edwards should go unrecognized for as long as he has, especially in today's revivalist climate. A contemporary and colleague of Dexter Gordon and Wardell Gray, Edwards cut a string of well-received albums in the '50s and '60s, but for the past two decades his output has been minimal. Now a new session with guest Tom Waits reconfirms his luminous mastery, and a vintage reissue reveals a swing-flavored subtlety and depth today's neo-boppers can't touch.

Waits, who sold the label on *Mississippi Lad*, is the odd man out in a brilliant cast of West Coast veterans, but his sandpaper pipes rasp remarkably true to the autumnal mood of the torchy "Little Man." The title track evokes the

barrelhouse blues of Edwards' naive Mississippi, while "Symphony On Central" harks back to the tenor battles of postwar Watts. Besides blues, the all-original program includes ballads, a Latin romp, and a pair of Mingus tributes, but Edwards' warmly nostalgic compositions are less impressive than his coolly sensual horn, which glides through slippery bop changes with Lester Young's deadpan nonchalance and Ben Webster's breathy passion. The band, sparked by unsung L.A. piano stalwart Art Hillery, cooks like a fine saucier, simmering slowly over a low flame.

By 1961, when he recorded *Good Gravy!*, Edwards' sound was already wistful and world-weary, suggesting lost love rather than lost youth. Backed by a redwood-solid rhythm trio, he finds fresh nuances in "Laura" and "On Green Dolphin Street," acknowledges his gospel roots on "Yes, I'll Be Ready," nods to Mingus on "Could You Forget," and honks with funky finesse on the title track. His moaning blues, whispery ballads, and vamping mambos—refined yet rugged, restrained but not detached—embody the classic beauty of hard-bop and the timeless spirit of jazz. (reviewed on CD)

—Larry Birnbaum



Chad Wackerman

FORTY REASONS—CMP CD 48: *HOLIDAY INSANE*; *YOU CAME ALONG*; *FORTY REASONS*; *FEARLESS*; *QUIET LIFE*; *WALTZING ON JUPITER*; *TELL ME*; *HOUSE ON FIRE*; *HIDDEN PLACES*; *GO*; *SCHEMES*. (44:18)

Personnel: Wackerman, drums; Allan Holdsworth, guitar; Jim Cox, keyboards; Jimmy Johnson, bass.

★★★★½

This one's a burner from the get-go. They all show off on the drummer's opener, with Holdsworth putting some never-before-heard edges on his trademark flowing licks, and bassist Johnson injecting his own strong melodic cries and shaping things solidly. The keyboardist also makes nice contributions with layers of sound throughout, rounding the quartet off and sanding the rough edges smooth.

As for Chad, he's an all-out kind of guy, not as Under Control-sounding as Dave Weckl, and I like that. He may not always set his licks up in the most conventional manner, but he certainly makes sense, and plays with a lot of heart. "Quiet Life" features some very sensitive playing (and is one of several he wrote by

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32

Stern Turns

by Robin Tolleson

Some people questioned the late Miles Davis for having the long-haired, amp-splitting **Mike Stern** on guitar on his comeback tour in 1981. But for the last decade, all that the consistent, energetic Stern has done is prove how right Miles was all along. In his band with saxophonist **Bob Berg**, the guitarist has found perhaps his tightest unit. And it is basically this unit that performs on two new releases, Stern's *Odds Or Evens* (Atlantic 7 82297-2; 53:25: ★★☆☆½) and Berg's *Back Roads* (Denon 81757 9042 4; 45:25: ★★★★★). Stern shines on both releases, though he appreciates the different roles he has in both.

Odds, the guitarist's fourth on Atlantic, kicks into gear on "D.C.," no doubt a tune which refers to the ultra-funky drummer Dennis Chambers, who plays on it. The guitarist solos lustily during the tune, then finishes it off with a jagged wail. Keyboardist Jim Beard (who also produced the date) is featured on the ballad "Common Ground," while saxman Berg and Stern share the hyper melody on the title track before ripping free. Some cuts are trio with bassist Lincoln Goines and drummer Ben Perowsky, some feature the formidable section



Mike Stern: quite the session pro

of bassist Anthony Jackson and D.C. Stern has always loved the energy of rock, but he shows so much more here. (reviewed on CD)

Berg's *Back Roads* is more keyboard-heavy, as the saxman consciously goes for more of an Americana sound with (again) producer

Jim Beard's piano. Stern must pick his spots, and does so with class. He fades into the melody the second time around on "American Gothic," giving it a slight push. Under Berg's Crusader-ish melody, he does a nice Larry Carlton fill-in routine on "Dreamer." He comps with more of an open, jangly sound than is heard on much of his own, harder-edged material. Even on "Nighthawks," Stern must fiddle while Dennis Chambers burns, waiting patiently for his solo, and then keep it short. He does so with enthusiasm. (reviewed on cassette)

Silent Will (Verve Forecast 843 652-2; 48:24: ★★☆☆½) is an all-star session put together by drummer/percussionist Andrea Marcelli. Stern delivers the melodies with energy and drive, actually dividing guitar duties with Alan Holdsworth. He's given brief passages to shine, such as on the title track, where he pulls out a thoughtful, probing set of riffs. The evolution of Mike Stern is clear—he's become quite the session pro after all these years, blending in here with the likes of Wayne Shorter, John Patitucci, Alex Acuna, and Mitch Forman. It reminds me of a very hip CTI session from the mid-'70s. Other than a couple spots where the rhythm section isn't totally in sync, this ambitious project is first-rate. The music is all composed by Marcelli, and covers quite a bit of ground. (reviewed on CD) **DB**

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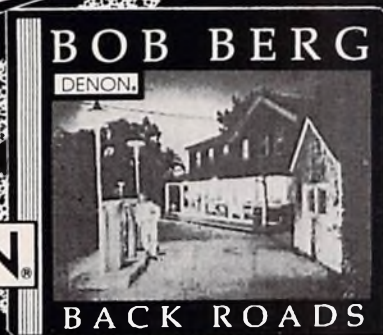
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synthesizers
Mike Stern guitar
Lincoln Goines bass
Dennis Chambers drums
Ben Perowsky drums (*American Gothic*)
Manolo Badrena percussion

Produced by Jim Beard

DENON

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 30

himself), while "Tell Me" finds him really wailing by tune's end, having revved up to warp speed and been given the green light. Some of his arrangements have the audacity of Lenny White's Astral Pirates, like the weird Wackerman/Holdsworth composition "Go," all 1:33 of it, a truly strange and wonderful excursion. On

the "band" composition "Schemes," he becomes The Drummer From Another Planet, pulling out some patterns and licks to mess with the most twisted of minds (did I mention CW's former employer, Mr. Zappa?). This is one heck of a playful record, and it's not selfish playing—it's a controlled burn.

This is one of Holdsworth's best settings since a loose, energetic quartet he played with several years back—Tony Williams' Lifetime. I'd love for these guys to stay together for a few records and set the house on fire some more. Wackerman lives up to his name, and more. (reviewed on CD) —Robin Tolleson

**Holiday
Hotels**

by Kevin Whitehead

Remember when CDs' compactness was a selling point? Some major labels don't—not with the outbreak of the odious longboxes you're not supposed to throw away, such as Columbia's boxes on Robert Johnson, Bessie Smith, and now **Billie Holiday**. *The Legacy (1933-1958)* (Columbia/Legacy 47724; 73:33/68:46/68:30: ★★★½) takes up nearly twice the needed space, and isn't designed for CD or LP shelves.



Billie '48: expressive grace

Musically, it's sort of a greatest-hits collection, but also includes rarities to tempt those who already bought nine volumes of *The Quintessential Billie*: eight alternate takes new to U.S. release (the notes say), "Saddest Tale" from Ellington's 1935 short *Symphony In Black*, and two Goodman airchecks—one a wacky "Jeepers Creepers," tag-teamed by Martha Tilton, Johnny Mercer, Billie, and Leo Watson, who scats and steals it. (A box blurb says the '58 "Fine And Mellow" comes from *The Sound Of Jazz* telecast, but it's the earlier rehearsal take Columbia always issues.) The tunes, 70 in all, have been intelligently selected, heavy on Billie's '36-'41 peak, with the barest nod to the sad final days. (Presumably, you don't need to be told of the music's glories for the 5,000th time; the stars rate the package, not the music.)

There are some production problems, though. Many tracks are newly remastered, but spot comparisons with the last (digital) LP issues reveal the new versions restore surface noise without appreciably improving highs. The studio alternates will give scholars something to study, and casual fans won't suffer much (though the box's "They Can't Take That Away From Me," live with Basie, can't beat the

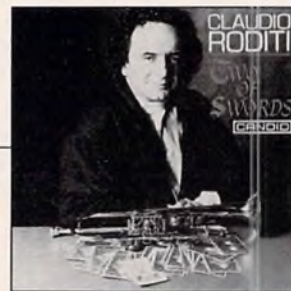
familiar studio version). Some alternates are very close to the release takes, Billie and the soloists set on their interpretations; on others her phrasing does vary notably from the master ("Until The Real Thing Comes Along"). All in all, it's an okay set, except for that dopey box.

The Complete Decca Recordings (GRP 2-601; 74:38/76:02: ★★★★★), from 1944 to 1950, contains eight newly released alternates and a couple of breakdowns where Billie speaks in her eerily croaky voice—50 tracks in all. By this time, her singing had gotten harsher, more time-ravaged, but hadn't lost its expressive grace. Producer Milt Gabler (interviewed in the 40-page booklet) heard her as a pop singer, and used strings and studio orchestras at odds with the lithe little jazz bands on her Columbia sides. Still, it works, except when icky harmony choirs turn up and/or the material is just too ridiculous ("Girls Were Made To Take Care Of Boys" makes the 1936 "One, Two, Button Your Shoe" sound Shakespearean). But "Lover Man" and "Good Morning Heartache" are here, along with two duets with Mr. Armstrong—co-written by James P. Johnson no less—one of which is notorious for Satch's muttering "f-k em" behind her.

Sound is generally good, but again the fancy housing is ill-conceived. At least with the Columbia package you can chuck the cardboard, stash the 52-page booklet, and store the jewel boxes on a normal shelf; the Decca has their book stapled into the high-rise gatefold cover in which the CDs fit. (If the plastic hubs that secure them break, tough.) It's another box designed for selling, not storing.

Holiday's 1952-59 Verve recordings constitute her last major body of work. As in the '30s, there were prestigious sidefolk—like Sweets Edison, Oscar Peterson (who plays organ on "Yesterdays"), Jimmy Rowles, Barney Kessel, and Ben Webster (terrific on "I Didn't Know What Time It Was")—often covering songs she'd recorded much earlier. *Lady In Autumn: The Best Of The Verve Years (Verve 849 434; 64:50/63:50: ★★★★★½)* is a selection of 24 such sides, plus 11 non-definitive live takes on Billie standards (like "I Cover The Waterfront," "Strange Fruit," and a '58 "Lover Man"). Most are from mid-'40s JATP shows, have slightly wobbly sound, and don't measure up to the studio tracks, where the sound is okay.

In her final decade, Holiday sometimes sounded confident as ever, sometimes winded and pained, as on the barroom lament "One For My Baby," an unlikely vehicle she didn't quite make her own. Still, one's opinion of Holiday's last recordings is personal, like religious convictions: you're entitled to your own, my reservations aside. The packaging? A standard, squat double-CD box, about twice as wide as it need be, the 32-page booklet included. Yet it looks tiny next to its roomy cousins. (all reviewed on CD) **DB**



Claudio Roditi

TWO OF SWORDS—Candid CCD79504: *TWO OF SWORDS; RUA DONA MARGARIDA; AIREGIN; PORTRAIT OF ART; DOM JOAQUIM BRAGA; HOW I MISS RIO; SECRET LOVE; BLUES FOR H.O.; PRA MIM; CON ALMA; THABO. (72:42)*

Personnel: Roditi, trumpet, flugelhorn; Jay Ashby, trombone; Edward Simon, Danilo Perez, piano; Nilson Matta, David Finck, bass; Duduka Fonseca, Akira Tana, drums.

★★★★

Michael Carvin

REVELATION—Muse MCD 5399: *REVELATION; IT MIGHT AS WELL BE SPRING; MORNING; EFFE; THABO; BODY AND SOUL; AVOTCIA; WE THREE KINGS. (47:02)*

Personnel: Carvin, drums; Claudio Roditi, trumpet, flugelhorn; Cecil Bridgewater, trumpet; Sonny Fortune, alto sax, flute; Cyrus Chestnut, John Hicks, piano; David Williams, bass.

★★★★

Terumasa Hino

FROM THE HEART—Blue Note CDP 7 96688 2: *FREE MANDELA; T FOR THREE; THERE'S ALWAYS TIME FOR PEACE; KIMIKO; LAVA DANCE; SAGE; OVER THE RAINBOW; WHY KNOT. (54:49)*

Personnel: Hino, trumpet, cornet; Røger Byam, tenor sax; John Hart, guitar; Onaje Allan Gumbs, piano; Michael Formanek, bass; Michael Carvin, drums.

★★★★½

A friend has called Muse "the Blue Note of the '90s." Carvin's *Revelation* is a case in point, but before we delve into that, let's draw parallels with it and Roditi's *Two Of Swords* and Hino's *From The Heart*. In each case, the leader is in his 40s, old enough to have grown up with Blue Note in its heyday, young enough to catch some of the overflow of the jazz youth movement of the '80s. Furthermore, all three albums feature bebop brassmen who follow the line of Clifford Brown, Lee Morgan, and Freddie Hubbard (although Miles Davis is an equally strong influence on Hino). Finally, these albums are hot.

Carvin's album has the flavor of a Blakey session, not only in the drummer's powerful playing but also in the urgency of the horns,

CECIL TAYLOR ON **hat** ART: RITUAL CRYSTALLIZED



Though Cecil Taylor has finally become a celebrated artist, he is still known for his tropes, and not his principles. That's because dazzling virtuosic music, no matter how complex and idiosyncratic, is more easily digestible than the sensibility that informs and propels it. Especially when it's Taylor's densely encoded brand of African-(Native)American ritualism. Yet, it has become unavoidable to discuss Taylor's art without focusing on his fertile, anthropomorphic spiritscapes.

In the three years between 1978's **One Too Many Salty Swift And Not Goodbye** (CD 2-6090/Release in preparation) and 1981's **The Eighth** (CD 6036), magneto-like vocal and movement elements gave Taylor's much-discussed methodology a more overt ritualistic character. No mere appendages, these aspects of Taylor's creativity are part and parcel of the well-documented transitions in Taylor's music during that period.

Taylor's solo music underwent obvious changes, evidenced on 1981's **Garden** (Part 1 - CD 6050; Part 2 - CD 6051). The liberal use of a burnished lyricism, the more deliberate ferreting of voicings and harmonic extensions, and the sequence of postscript-like

encores that distinguished **Garden** upon its initial release are now staples of Taylor's solo works.

While more discrete, the developments in Taylor's ensemble music were no less important. **One Too Many Salty Swift And Not Goodbye** is a mold-breaking statement, an articulation of more elastic and taxing structural devices than the straightforward themes and motivic development of the Unit Structures-era, propositions ably forwarded by Jimmy Lyons, Raphe Malik, Ramsey Ameen, Sirone, and Ronald Shannon Jackson. Going a step further, 1980's **It Is In The Brewing Luminous** (CD 6012) verges on the athematic, a vibrant flux of ideas sharpened by Lyons, Ameen, Alan Silva, Jerome Cooper, and Sunny Murray's empathy with Taylor's idiom.

Finally, with the definitive energy music of **The Eighth**, Taylor strikes a golden balance between materials, methods, and musicianship. Whit Lyons, in perhaps his finest moment, William Parker, and Rashied Bakr, Taylor melds the musical and spiritual imperatives for communion. That's the crux of Taylor's ritualism, and, unlike some other periods of Taylor's career, its crystallization has been well documented.

Bill Shoemaker/April 1991



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piano, and bass. All three horns appear on the title cut, handing the torch to each other solo by solo. After this, it's one or two horns plus the rhythm section—but no letup in intensity. "It Might As Well Be Spring," with Roditi on flugelhorn and Williams adding dialog in the bass department, is as pretty as hard-bop gets. Bridgewater, edgy and bright, dazzles on "We Three Kings," and Fortune stamps his searing configurations on "Body And Soul." Veteran engineer Rudy Van Gelder has captured the sounds with the fidelity and presence of his definitive Blue Note work of the '50s and '60s.

"Thabo," Roditi's tribute to Carvin which appears on both *Revelation* and *Two Of Swords*, catches the Brazilian trumpeter and flugelhorn player at his Blue Note-iest, both compositionally and in performance. Coming last on his own album, it's a perky wrap-up to a session with strong melodic and rhythmic writing—eight of the tunes are his—and exuberant playing. The personnel list calls one

group the Brazilian Quintet, the other the Jazz Quartet, but the performances come out jazz all the way. Ashby, who deserves greater jazz recognition (he has made a career of Latin music), is a fleet trombonist akin to Carl Fontana and the late Frank Rosolino (e.g., Roditi's "Rua Dona Margarida" and "Pra Mim"). Both bass players stand out in their firm accompaniment and highly charged solos.

From *The Heart*, with Carvin on drums, brings us full circle. Hino, born in Tokyo, is more abstract, angular, and chromatic than Roditi or Bridgewater. There's a Blakey-like feeling to his "T For Three," and "There's Always Time For Peace," which follows, shows that he's a less mellow balladeer than Roditi. Hart, also a leader for Blue Note in the '90s, is a warm guitarist who reminds you of early Jim Hall. Gumbs and especially Byam seem less distinguishable from the masses, but the pianist often recalls Herbie Hancock, which fits Hino's Miles-like tendencies. (reviewed on CD) —Owen Cordle

More Or Les A Genius

by Bill Milkowski

In 1946, **Les Paul** left his gig with the Andrew Sisters and went into hibernation. Two years later he emerged from an intensive research & development phase with a "New Sound." The results of his "tinkering," as he likes to call it, changed the face of pop music and revolutionized the way records are made. The new boxed set, *Les Paul: The Legend And The Legacy* (Capitol 2-91654; 77:02/76:17/77:17/76:53: ★★★★★), celebrates his genius as it documents his Capitol output from 1948 to 1958. Capitol has assembled 75 tracks from that golden decade on three CDs. The fourth CD is a collection of previously unreleased material from Les' private archives.

Included in this handsomely-packaged, thoroughly annotated boxed set are vintage episodes from the *Les Paul Radio Show*. Originally broadcast on NBC from 1949 to 1950, these 15-minute spots of scripted bantering between Les and wife Mary Ford generally focused on Les' obsession with electronics and served as a means of introducing gadgets like his Les Paulverizer to the public. Imagine Thomas Alva Edison with a weekly radio show and a corny sense of humor and you get the picture.

Les Paul introduced his "New Sound" to the world in 1948 with the release of the hit single "Lover" b/w "Brazil." No one had ever heard anything like it before. Utilizing his patented sound-on-sound technique (he didn't introduce multi-track recording until 1957), Les played all the parts himself, including drums and bass. On those cuts, he combined all of his inventions and recording techniques into one bag of tricks, relying heavily on such effects as reverb, delay, echo, flanging, phasing, and sped-up guitars to come up with his signature sound. Those early experiments laid the groundwork for generations of guitar players and studio engineers to come.



Les Paul and Mary Ford: sublime

Besides being a prolific inventor and pioneer, Les Paul is also one helluva guitar player, as he demonstrates on these 100-plus tracks. The spiritual father of modern virtuosos like Danny Gatton and Al Di Meola, Les transcends genres on these tracks. He's got a bit of country, a touch of pop, a large slice of jazz, and a pinch of rock in his playing, and it's all underscored by his irrepressible personality and cornball sense of humor. He swings harder and takes more risks than Chet Atkins, though he possesses the same bell-like tones, immaculate technique, and attention to melody.

Les himself describes his classic Les Paul guitar tone as "that big, fat, round, ballsy sound with the bright high-end." That signature voice is heard upfront in the mix on instrumentals like "The Carioca," "Brazil," "Three Little Words," and "Caravan." And on cuts like "Deep In The Blues," "Walkin' And Whistlin' The Blues," and "St. Louis Blues," he flaunts some impressive string-bending prowess. Another of Les' strengths as a guitarist is accompaniment, as he proved in the early '40s with Bing Crosby. On dozens of tracks here, he plays the sublime

accompanist to Mary Ford, a former country singer who was remolded into a pop-jazz siren. Mary's close-mic'ed, sultry vocals lie somewhere between Patsy Cline and June Christy, with a touch of Mildred Bailey on the jump-blues numbers. And when Les overdubs her voice, as on tunes like "Smoke Rings," "How High The Moon," and "Just One More Chance," she sounds like all three Andrews Sisters. Some of Mary's finest moments here include "Vaya Con Dios," "Tennessee Waltz," "I'm Confessin' (That I Love You)," and "Sentimental Journey."

There is a sprinkling of novelty numbers throughout this boxed set, including "Goofus," "Honolulu Rock-A-Rolla," and "Ro-Ro-Robinson," which feature the crazy sped-up guitars, gobs of tremelo, and tons of reverb. But Les gets down to some serious picking on a Basiesque arrangement of "I'm Still In Love With You," a swinging "Green Champagne," a 5/4 "Jazz On The Reservation," and "Cookin'," a spirited homage to the Benny Goodman Sextet and Charlie Christian.

For an added treat, they've included several of the radio jingles that Les and Mary cut for Rheingold Beer and Robert Hall clothiers. And for further insights, you can't beat Les' track-by-track interview, in which he details the exact guitar and amplifier used on each cut. A treasure trove of recording history and a must for guitar fans. (reviewed on CD) **DB**



Vince Mendoza

INSTRUCTIONS INSIDE—Manhattan CDP 7 965452: *SPIRIT MOVES; SLOWLY I TURN; WILL TO LIVE; SAY WE DID; JUNG PARADE; STEADY WONDER; FAITHKEEP; NEW WORLD; HEARTS IN PART.* (56:23)
Personnel: Mendoza, drum sequencing; with Bob Mintzer, Joe Lovano, tenor and soprano saxes; Judd Miller, EVI (electronic valve instrument); John Scofield, electric guitar; Ralph Towner, acoustic guitar; Will Lee, Marc Johnson, Jimmy Haslip, bass; Peter Erskine, William Kennedy, drums; Don Alias, Manolo Badrena, Alex Acuna, percussion; Randy Brecker, Lew Soloff, Marvin Stamm, trumpet; Jerry Peel, Bob Carlisle, french horn; Dave Taylor, bass trombone; Dave Braynard, tuba; Russell Ferrante, synthesizers; Gloria Cheng, piano.

★ ★ ★ ½

Vince Mendoza (see "Riffs" Jan. '91) com-

posed, arranged, conducted, and produced *Instructions Inside*, his second release on Blue Note's Manhattan label. He credits Judd Miller with co-composing the synth lines that formed the blueprint for the compositions. But this disc has the feel of one composer with a distinctive style.

Instructions Inside is heavy on atmosphere, and Mendoza has gathered a group of musicians whose backgrounds in both acoustic and electric jazz can supply just about anything he's trying to create. Synth lines press forward and back in gentle exhalations, sighing like tropical breezes. Reflective guitar phrases (by the always-reliable John Scofield and Ralph Towner) stretch out luxuriantly. This array of players knows how to relax together. Mendoza has an ear for heart-grabbing changes that make their move when you least expect it. The influences in his writing range wide, from world music to Weather Report to Frenchman Erik Satie, who might recognize the solo piano tune "Hearts In Part" as a harmonically quirky second cousin to his "Gymnopedies."

The hand of Gil Evans can be felt, too, in the lush brass scoring of "Slowly I Turn" and "Jung Parade." Played against a cushioned backdrop of trumpets, horns, and tuba, Randy Brecker's trumpet solo on "Slowly" caps the assured, laid-back mood. (reviewed on CD).

—Elaine Guregian

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Cheer Of A Black Planet

by Larry Birnbaum

As Western genres from jazz to country wallow in nostalgia, African pop plunges boldly into the future. Instead of the watered-down crossover splash that seemed imminent a couple of years ago, a resurgence of traditional rhythms has touched off a torrent of undiluted truth.

The soft-core anthology, *Planet Africa* (Rhythm Safari CDL 57166; 46:07: ★★★), already sounds dated, with reggae from the Ivory Coast's Alpha Blondy, disco from South Africa's Condry Ziqubu, Caribbean-style zouk from Zaire's Abeti, and the bland eclecticism of Senegalese Euro-stars Toure Kunda. South Africa's township jive is represented by cabaret popster Miriam Makeba and white wannabe Johnny Clegg, while saccharine arrangements smother bittersweet vocals by Senegal's Yousou N'Dour and Ismael Lo. The music's vital essence cuts through the sugarcoating, but Afropop, inspired by salsa, soul, and calypso, is readily accessible straight-up.

Malian vocalist **Salif Keita** won regional fame with the seminal Super Rail Band and international attention with a stunning solo album, *Soro*. On *Amen* (Mango 162 539 910-2; 43:51: ★★★★★), producer Joe Zawinul paints translucent textures behind Keita's passionate tenor, fleshing out Mandinka melodies with a rocking backbeat, slap bass, riffing horns, and a soulful chorus. Wayne Shorter's soaring soprano, Carlos Santana's bluesy guitar, and Zawinul's own Weather Report-ish keyboards slip in inconspicuously, complementing Keita's style while respecting its integrity.

Oumou Sangare is from a Malian province where female singers predominate. Her debut album, *Moussolo* (World Circuit WCD 021; 32:02: ★★★★★½), was a local smash, and though the lyrics are in Wassoulou, the hypnotic lilt needs no translation. Bassist/arranger Ahmadou Ba Guindo frames Sangare's wistful vocals in spare acoustic settings that use guitar, violin, and bongos to mimic native instruments. Her air of sophisticated naiveté is captivating on instant classics like "Djama Kaissoumou" and "Ah Ndiya," but the mood palls on weaker material.

Singer/guitarist **Boubacar Traoré**, from northwest Mali, spent most of his career in Paris before retiring, but his records were highly influential at home. On *Mariama* (Sterns Africa STCD 1032; 48:05: ★★★★★) he blends blues and European folk licks with the centuries-old *kora* music of hereditary griots, anticipating the "African blues" of his countryman Ali Farka Toure. His mellow picking and mournful vocals suggest the gentle ragtime blues of songsters like Furry Lewis and Mississippi John Hurt, lending credence to the theory that the blues was born on the sub-Saharan plain.

Djanka Diabate is a cousin and protégé of Mory Kante, the Guinea-born former Super Rail singer who forged his own brand of Mandinka funk. Her solo debut, *Djanka* (Sound Wave 89006-2; 37:55: ★★★★★½), is a hook-filled hodgepodge of dance beats from Madonna

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Kotoja's Ken Okulolo: uplifting

to Zairean pop queen Tshala Muana. Diabate's griot heritage shines through on originals like "Malaka" and "Fote," but her airy vocals are often stifled by syn-drums and tinny horn charts, with kora and fuzz-guitar solos only adding to the confusion.

An unabashed admirer of Billie Holiday, Aretha Franklin, and Anita Baker who's spent the past decade in the U.S., Ethiopian diva **Aster Aweke** unveiled her acrobatic soprano last year on *Aster. Kabu* (Columbia 47846: ★★★★★½) is smoother and less startling, with pop-jazz arrangements more closely tailored to her Oriental-sounding colorations. Except on "Tchewata," where an Ethiopian harp provides ethnic ambiance, the charts now sound like Sade's; but Aweke's voice—spiraling to spectacular heights, pirouetting around the notes, then swooping down to an intimate coo—creates a unique aura. (reviewed on cassette)

Kenyan pop, long dominated by the rumba-based *soukous* of neighboring Zaire, has developed a faster, more downbeat variation called *benga*, showcased on *Kenya Dance Mania* (Earthworks 3-1024-2; 72:10: ★★★★★). Artists like H.O. Kabaselleh and Daniel Kamau are carried over from the previous *Guitar Paradise Of East Africa* compilation, but Nairobi-based Zairean groups have been dropped in favor of native stars like Gabriel Omolo, who raps fatherly advice on the irresistible "Wed Today Divorce Tomorrow," and the Maroon Commandos, a venerable military band whose rollicking, nine-minute "Mwakaribisha Na Maroon" is much too short. Intended strictly for local consumption, these no-frills dance jams pack a universal tang.

Zimbabwean *jit*, a clipped, springy rhythm midway between *benga* and South African *jive*, is one of the continent's most infectious sounds; but the country's leading musician, **Thomas Mapfumo**, is one of its least typical, basing his mature style directly on folkloric thumb-piano music. *Ndangariro* (Shanachie 44012: ★★★★★), a re-release of *jit*-like material from the early '80s, is lighter and catchier than his portentous recent work. Unlike such effervescent *jit*-masters as the Four Brothers, Map-

fumo struggles to integrate South African, Zairean, and Zimbabwean influences here, with results more illuminating than compelling. (reviewed on cassette)

Zairean soukous singer **Tabu Ley Rochereau** is celebrated throughout Africa, but after 30 years he's lost his edge. On his latest greatest-hits collection, *Man From Kinshasa* (Shanachie 43089; 43:56: ★★★★★½), he spices recycled riffs with funk changes in a vain effort to keep current. His honeyed tenor remains

seductively potent, but his brassy accompaniment seems archaic compared to the lean guitar backing of younger vocalists like Kanda Bongo Man and Aurlus Mabele. Still, when he locks into lead guitarist Huit Kilos' vamping groove on "Ponce-Pilate," there's nothing to do but get up and dance.

Imprisoned by the South African government, saluted by Nelson Mandela, *jive* poet **Mzwakhe Mbuli** (see p. 15) is known as much for polemics as music. His second U.S.-

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distributed album, *Resistance Is Defence* (Earthworks 3-1025: ★★★★★), combines springy *mbaqanga* instrumentals with Zulu choral harmonies, adding a splash of jazz-fusion on "Stalwarts" and a torrent of anti-apartheid invective throughout. The beat, lighter and quicker than traditional jive, is irresistible, but though Mbuli's bitterness is understandable, his recited lyrics, dripping with sarcastic indignation, seem heavy-handed in today's changed political climate. (reviewed on cassette)

Kotoja's message, by contrast, is saccharine enough to make Paul Simon gag. This San Francisco-based unit comprises American and Nigerian musicians, most notably longtime Fela Anikulapo Kuti trumpeter Babatunde Wil-

liams, under the leadership of former Sunny Ade bassist Ken Okulolo. Their debut album, *Freedom Is What Everybody Needs* (Mesa R2 79038; 46:36: ★★★★★½) stirs *juju*, highlife, *makossa*, and Fela-style Afro-beat into a gringo-friendly, safe-sex dance blend. But if Okulolo's peace-and-love lyrics fall flat, the rhythm is solid and the music genuinely uplifting.

A fusion of Islamic chanting and Yoruba rhythms, the Nigerian *fuji* sound emerged in the '60s out of root forms dating back to at least World War I. Though the music has spread to Nigeria's Christian provinces and left its mark on contemporary *juju*, **Chief Dr. Sikiru Ayinde Barrister's** *New Fuji Garbage* (Globestyle CRORBD 067; 57:13: ★★★★★) is the first sample of this uncom-

promisingly neo-traditional idiom to be distributed in the U.S. The ensemble comprises Barrister on vocals and keyboard, a three-man chorus, a Hawaiian-style steel guitarist, and 12 percussionists, who expertly layer traps, congas, Brazilian agogo bells, and talking drums over a clave beat that Afro-Cuban devotees will find familiar. On the half-hour title track, the drummers lay down a mesmerizing, tightly coordinated barrage as the steel guitar drops dive-bomber glisses and Barrister chants the incongruously daffy lyrics—"Rise up and dance to my new fuji garbage!"—in English and Yoruba. There's not the slightest concession to Western tastes, but the effect is utterly exhilarating. (reviewed on CD unless otherwise noted) **DB**

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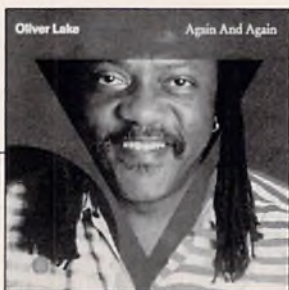
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Oliver Lake

AGAIN AND AGAIN—Gramavision 79468: *AGAIN AND AGAIN; ANYWAY; CROSS RIVER; TOUCH; AZTEC; MASK; RE-CRE-ATE; M.I.L.D.* (53:44)

Personnel: Lake, alto, soprano saxes; John Hicks, piano; Reggie Workman, bass; Pheeroan akLaff, drums.

★ ★ ★

Barefield/Lake/Cyrille

LIVE AT LEVERKUSENER JAZZTAGE—Sound Aspects 039: *MIRROR WORLD; GALLERY; SHELL; AKAN V; IN BETWEEN; FOR DANCERS.* (58:49)

Personnel: A. Spencer Barefield, six- and 12-string acoustic guitars; Oliver Lake, alto, soprano saxes; Andrew Cyrille, drums.

★ ★ ★ ½

Arthur Blythe

HIPMOTISM—Enja 79672: *DEAR DESSA; DANCE BENITA DANCE; COUSIN SIDNEY; SHADOWS; HIPMOTISM; MISS EUGIE; MATTER OF FACT; BUSH BABY; MY SON RA.* (52:13)

Personnel: Blythe, alto sax; Hamiet Bluiett, baritone sax; Kelvyn Bell, electric guitar; Gust William Tsilis, vibraphone, marimba; Bob Stewart, tuba; Famoudou Don Moye, drums; Arto Tuncboyaci, percussion, voice.

★ ★ ★ ★

Two altoists who emerged from the fruitful (if maligned) '70s vanguard, and got temporarily sidetracked with commercial bids—Lake with his dance band Jump Up, Blythe flirting with synths and strings—are back on track here.

Again And Again isn't perfect. Lake's self-declared ballad album—all the tunes are slow, though a couple sound dirgey—is too narrowly conceived, partly because the tunes aren't his best: even the pieces structured around hooks are melodically unmemorable. But he gets conscientious support from the subtle and swinging Pheeroan, from Workman, whose time and tone are solid as a tree trunk, and from the wise and discreet Hicks, who first recorded with Oliver back on 1971's *Ntu*. Lake long ago developed a distinctive voice, a seeming hybrid of Jackie McLean and Anthony Braxton; Oliver combines the former's searing tone (like Jackie he stands out by playing a little out of tune) with some of Braxton's rhythmic ploys, like accelerating momentarily in the middle of a rubato phrase, to give it an arc of excitement. His lyricism betrays timeless values and a searcher's curiosity.

Oliver's co-op date with guitarist Barefield and master drummer Cyrille—each contributes two pieces—is live and loose, refreshingly open, like a window in early spring. The trio sounds almost weightlessly buoyant but never

insubstantial. Cyrille supplies a piece's spinal structure while letting the time breathe, and Barefield's chunky acoustic axes (one has resonating sympathetic strings) give the date a timbral tang. (His pensive grace on the opener suggests Metheny's positive influence.) And Lake, whose "For Dancers" and "Gallery" show he does write fetching themes, displays his alto-hefty soprano and knottier, more outward-bound alto.

Everything that makes Blythe endearing is evident on *Hipmotism*: his astringent lead-alto tone, which can make you overlook his occasionally predictable solo lines; his simply catchy ditties (new ones as well as oldies "Ra"—done solo—and "Bush Baby"); Bob Stewart's jauntily pumping tuba. The full septet's on only three tracks; elsewhere Arthur employs subgroups, the oddest of which is "Dear Dessa"'s trio of alto, marimba, and wordless voice. That aside, *Hipmotism*'s the kind of record he's made before—even if Bell's often smoother and less spiky than on earlier dates, and Bluiett's bari adds a new color—but not lately. His concept wasn't broke, so why'd he ever try to fix it? (reviewed on CD)

—Kevin Whitehead



Stevie Ray Vaughan

THE SKY IS CRYING—Epic 47390: *BOOT HILL; THE SKY IS CRYING; EMPTY ARMS; LITTLE WING; WHAM; MAY I HAVE A TALK WITH YOU; CLOSE TO YOU; CHITLINS CON CARNE; SO EXCITED; LIFE BY THE DROP.* (38:49)

Personnel: Vaughan, guitar and vocals; Chris Layton, drums; Tommy Shannon, bass; Reese Wynans, keyboards.

★ ★ ★ ½

Between the time Stevie Ray Vaughan burst onto the public consciousness as David Bowie's foil on 1982's *Let's Dance* to the time of his tragic death in a helicopter crash last year, the Texan became a modern-day blues legend. His playing, at once stinging and supple, was as soulful and nuanced as a human voice.

His brother Jimmy Vaughan compiled this set of studio outtakes from 1985-89. Clocking in at just shy of 40 minutes, the album seems incomplete, time-wise. But in terms of illustrating the multiple aspects of Vaughan's (and Double Trouble's) talent, it's a full plate, an inspiring tribute, and a worthy addition to Vaughan's discography.

Included are an instrumental version of Jimi Hendrix's "Little Wing" and a raucous reading of Lonnie Mack's "Wham." Vaughan sometimes

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sounded out of his element over jazz-inflected chord changes, but he handles the jazz-bluesy swagger of Kenny Burrell's "Chitlins Con Carne" persuasively. The set closes with a short acoustic version of "Life By The Drop," which serves as a poignant farewell from a master who died far too early. (reviewed on CD)
—Josef Woodard



Mandala Octet

LA SPADA DI SAN GALGANO (The Sword Of Saint Galgano)—Accurate/Volition AC-3616: *LA SPADA DI SAN GALGANO; DAS WALDSTERBEN; DIMENSION; WORDS IN THE WIND; OBLIQUE BLUE SHADOWS; OBLIQUE BLUE FINALE.* (66:40)

Personnel: John Leaman, bass; Matt Wilson, drums; John Medeski, piano; Charlie Kohlhase, baritone sax; Douglas Yates, alto sax; Matt Langley, tenor sax; Curtis Hasselbring, trombone; Tom Duprey, trumpet; Paula Cole, vocal (cut 2).

★ ★ ★ ½

Charlie Kohlhase

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT—Accurate AC 3800: *LIFE AS WE KNEW IT; WHERE IS CHINA?; OFF MINOR; DYANI; DEN OF INQUIETUDE; YOU GO TO MY HEAD; CONFUSION DOGS OH HOW I GOT HOOKED ON OHIO; THE NNEW LLAMA WALK; BUG WOMAN/MONSTER ISLAND BEACH PARTY.* (61:05)

Personnel: Kohlhase, alto and baritone saxes; Matt Wilson, drums; Curtis Hasselbring, trombone; John Turner, bass; Matt Langley, tenor sax.

★ ★ ★ ★

Here's a New York/Boston axis band performing extended (20-minute) compositions that tell serious tales seriously but well. The short title track's deep, noble modal melody speaks autumn in bosky Tuscany, while notes explain a disenchanting medieval knight rejecting dissipation and turning to religious asceticism. "Das Waldsterben" ("Forest Death"), a somber plaint against acid rain, spins a skein of austere ensembles against a smoky voice and horn solos with no easy heads (sequenced, variegated themes) or repeats. Duprey's "Dimension" (the only piece not penned by leader Leaman) shows Sun Ra-vian wit in running a dead-simple line over dense chords and a manic, metallic two-beat, with raw orchestral yawns (it's a big octet).

Mandala's music often has a reverent, choir-like resonance, as if in the shell of the Saint's weedy romanesque basilica on the cover. While Leaman might leaven a sober palette with a bit of Mingus (or Duprey's) humor and Gil Evans deftness, Mandala's weighty but not heavy-handed approaches to contemporary

issues manifest clear-eyed social conviction through compositions of fire and substance, in the tradition of Charlie Haden's Liberation Music Orchestra and Paul Winter's Consort.

Kohlhase is a busy, witty guy: he's Mandala's low reed, anchors the sax section for Either/Orchestra, leads a part-time Saxophone Quartet, and has a good time of it here running his first Quintet album. Three horns with no chord instrument—lean mix! bold notion!—revel in melodic continuity and spinning counterpoint.

All is palatable, companionable, swinging, and tweaks the ear, for Hasselbring and Langley are fellow molders of the vernacular. Models are warmly lampooned: Jack DeJohnette's ECM bands come felicitously to mind on the spookily vamped "China?"; Monk's "Off Minor" gets a straight head and bent parts. There's an edgy waltz, a Sun Ra brooder, a haunting standard. Kohlhase's writing, as Leaman's is for Mandala, is canny and idiosyncratic, yet more playfully so. (reviewed on CD)
—Fred Bouchard

Digital Impressionists

by Jon Andrews

The most appealing quality of synthesizers is that the user has access to a wide range of colors and voices, whether emulating conventional instruments or generating new sounds. One effective way to use that expanded palette is to create an atmosphere or evoke a sense of place.

Vangelis' music could be played by large ensembles, but *The City* (Atlantic 7 82248-2; 43:14: ★★★★★) was composed and recorded in his hotel room in Rome. Describing the events and moods of an urban day from early morning into the night, Vangelis writes big, symphonic themes for synthesized horns, guitars, strings, and percussion. "Procession" (for the late-night hours) is the sort of stately, hypnotic vamp at which he excels. Ingenious and full of hooks, *The City* recalls some of Vangelis' best work, e.g., "Bladerunner" and oddly enough, *China*, so it's easy to forgive a little bombast or a few gimmicks.

Klaus Schulze's Dresden is a very different city. *The Dresden Performance* (Virgin Venture CDVED 903: 73:34/68:50: ★★★★★½) is music intended for a 1989 performance in reunification East Germany. Police stopped the one-man show, so this generous set includes live and studio performances. Schulze paints a gloomy sonic picture of a tense, paranoid Dresden, with its memories of china and fire-bombing. His electronics emulate a string orchestra with keyboards, choir, and drums, all expressing Teutonic urgency and Wagnerian melodrama. Schulze tends to meander through his thematic explorations, and may linger too long on the extended pieces.

Without replicating conventional instruments, **Ingram Marshall** devises process-oriented music. With *Alcatraz* (New Albion NA 040 CD; 46:21: ★★★★★½), Marshall employs synthesizers, filters, and delay processes to manipulate and alter found sounds. For this "recording-photo album," he and photographer Jim Bengston capture the sound and images of a trip to the decaying prison. Ambient sounds of San Francisco Bay combine with Balinese flute and "minimalist" piano to transport the listener to and from the island, where Marshall conjures up a highly impressionistic mix of natural and manmade sources. Amid gentle, marine sounds, you hear the jarring, amplified slam of cell doors. On "Solitary," treated voices suggest monastic chants. Marshall achieves an intuitive blend of ambient



Tangerine Dream's (l-r) Paul Haslinger, Chris Franke, and Edgar Froese: changing terrains

music and turbulent *musique concrete* unlike anything else in the field.

Canyon Dreams (Miramar MFCD 2801; 40:37: ★★★★★) is **Tangerine Dream's** soundtrack to a video exploration of the Grand Canyon (Miramar Productions). Recorded in 1987 and newly available as an audio release, *Canyon Dreams* changes styles and moods to capture the changing terrain, colors, and vistas of the big ditch. *Melrose* (Private Music 2078-2-P; 59:27: ★★★★★½) brings the synthesizer trio up to date, with co-founder Chris Franke replaced by partner Edgar Froese's son, Jerome. *Melrose* offers more developed compositions than recent Tangerine Dream releases, along with an array of new sounds.

John Serrie has quietly built an audience in the space music underground (and with some New Age types). Serrie composes airy music for planetariums, and his work frequently incorporates images of aviation and space-flight. *Tingri* (Miramar MPCD 2003; 45:07: ★★★★★) involves more varied, tropical themes, but some tracks flirt dangerously with New Age/pop cliches. *Tingri* contains some of Serrie's best writing, especially "Winter's Chapel," constructed on a simple, irresistible riff. Is this music for a thousand points of light?

Here's the inevitable Brian Eno comparison. **William Orbit** is a British producer and synthesist who understands the interfaces between ambient, pop, and world musics. *Strange Cargo 2* (I.R.S. No Speak 012; 46:48: ★★★★★½) is full of surprises. At first, Orbit smoothly grafts atmospheric electronics onto shameless Paula Abdul-style dance rhythms for an "ambient-house" mix. Suddenly, *Strange Cargo 2* leaps off the dance floor and runs into the jungle. The second half of the well-produced album features ethnic percussion and themes worthy of Jon Hassell or Peter Gabriel. (all reviewed on CD) **DB**



Tab Smith

JUMP TIME—Delmark DD-447: *BECAUSE OF YOU; SLOW MOTION; DEE JAY SPECIAL; SIN; UNDER A BLANKET OF BLUE; HOW CAN YOU SAY WE'RE THRU; WIG SONG; HANDS ACROSS THE TABLE; ONE MAN DIP; DOWN BEAT; BROWN BABY; KNOTTY-HEADED WOMAN; BOOGIE JOOGIE; CAN'T WE TAKE A CHANCE; ALL MY LIFE; JUMP TIME; THIS LOVE OF MINE; AIN'T GOT NOBODY; LOVE IS A WONDERFUL THING; NURSERY RHYME JUMP.* (58:28)

Personnel: Smith, alto, tenor saxes, vocals (cuts 6, 9, 11); Sonny Cohn, trumpet; Leon Washington, tenor sax; Lavern Dillon, Teddy Brannon, piano; Wilfred Middlebrooks, bass; Walter Johnson, drums; Louis Blackwell, vocals (12, 18).

★★★

Illinois Jacquet

THE BLUES; THAT'S ME!—Prestige OJCCD-614-2: *THE BLUES/THAT'S ME; STILL KING; 'ROUND MIDNIGHT; THE GALLOPING LATIN; FOR ONCE IN MY LIFE; EVERYDAY I HAVE THE BLUES.* (41:00)

Personnel: Jacquet, tenor sax, bassoon (3); Wynton Kelly, piano; Tiny Grimes, guitar; Buster Williams, bass; Oliver Jackson, drums.

★★★½

The righteous spark of hep jazz cats ridin' blues kept the dance floors of frolic pads jammed with black Americans through WWII and the ensuing years. Illinois Jacquet, a Texas Tenor gone West, was in the thick of things, honking "Flying Home" with Lionel Hampton, then playing it hot with Cab Calloway, Count Basie, his own outfits. Saxman Tab Smith blew his wig in the employ of Lucky Millinder (stints in the '30s and '40s), worked with the likes of Red Allen and Teddy Wilson, and wound up fronting a popular r&b combo. Two recent additions to the CD racks evince the attractive blues spirit of these rock & roll pioneers.

Smith recorded several dozen tunes for United between '51 and '57, 20 of which (including five hitherto unreleased) show up in this Delmark collection. They're a mixed bunch, reflecting the practice then of appeasing buyers by placing sweet numbers back-to-back with swinging ones. Hearts-and-flowers ballads, typically featuring Smith's saxes cooing endearments, are deadly, but most of the jump and slow blues selections are plenty pleasurable. A proficient soloist, he shakes and bounces over his fit little band without going over the top, ennobling "Slow Motion," "Dee Jay Special," "Wig Song," "Boogie Joogie." Good fun.

Blues has been an essential component of Jacquet's tenor sound for the entirety of his estimable five decades-plus career. Some of his finest down-home playing to be had on record or compact disc comes from *The Blues*;

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That's Me!, a 1969 session. A strong draft, not a tempest, he wafts a stunning blend of joy and sadness from measure to measure in his choruses on the eponymous feature track, perfectly complementing the river-deep feelings of the other great blues players present, Tiny Grimes and Wynton Kelly. Their agitated adaptation of Memphis Slim's "Everyday I Have The Blues" is almost as fascinating. Less bluesy and moderately satisfying are two up-tempo numbers and a couple ballads. (reviewed on CD)
—Frank-John Hadley

distinctive styles of the three Band vocalists—Rick Danko's lankiness, Levon Helm's throatiness, and the late, great Richard Manuel's genteel croon—Robertson's pales and compromises the potential of his songs. So should Robertson always be saddled with Band comparisons? Probably, considering that group's increasing importance in rock history. The all-too-rare presence of Garth Hudson's unmistakable, soaring keyboard sound here further brings on Band nostalgia.

As with much of his Bandworks, Robertson's lyrics are often sifted through the filters of heartland Americana and of Biblical references—more for the sentiment and the kitsch than any specific message ("Soap Box Preacher," "Day Of Reckoning"). The closing tune, "The Rainbow" comes replete with a gospel-ish vocal wash by the Zion Harmonizers. It plays like a moving benediction to a wonderful collection of songs/stories. (reviewed on CD)
—Josef Woodard



Robbie Robertson

STORYVILLE—Geffen 24303: *NIGHT PARADE; HOLD BACK THE DAWN; GO BACK TO YOUR WOODS; SOAP BOX PREACHER; DAY OF RECKONING (BURNIN FOR YOU); WHAT ABOUT NOW; SHAKE THIS TOWN; BREAKIN THE RULES; RESURRECTION; SIGN OF THE RAINBOW.* (54:54)

Personnel: Robertson, guitar, vocals, keyboards; Bill Dillon, Paul Buchanan, Leo Nocentelli, guitar; David Ricketts, guitar, bass, keyboards; Ronnie Foster, Hammond organ; Garth Hudson, Martin Page, Art Neville, Paul Moore, Ivan Neville, keyboards; Ronald Jones, John Robinson, Billy Ward, Jerry Marotta, Ziggybooo Modeleste, drums; Ginger Baker, Alex Acuna, Ndugu Chancler, Jared Levine, percussion; Guy Pratt, George Porter, Robert Bell, Stephen Hague, bass; Rebirth Brass Band, horns; Aaron Neville, Neil Young, Rick Danko, Bruce Hornsby, David Baerwald, Zion Harmonizers, Mike Miller, Code Blue, Chief Monk Boudreaux, Chief Bo Diddis, Yvonne Williams, Carmen Twillie, Clydene Jackson, Roy Galloway, background vocals.

★ ★ ★ ½

There is plenty to admire about the second official solo album by Robertson. He has mediated the influences of both his own picturesque songcraft he perfected as primary songsmith for the Band and producer Daniel Lanois' appealingly ethereal sheen on the last album. He has culled the best and brightest from both his adopted hometown of Los Angeles and, especially, New Orleans (the Neville Brothers and their Crescent City ilk are virtually co-conspirators). He even allows himself to stretch out a bit as a guitarist for a change, slipping in some signature-twisted twang.

Storyville has all the makings of a great American song set. One nagging problem, though: Robertson's slight voice, inflected with a token touch of grit, and a talespinner's tendency to slip from song to narrative spiel, is an acquired taste that at least one reviewer has trouble acquiring. Compared with the

A Live Wire

by John Ephland

In the spirit of Charlie Parker, Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Grateful Dead, and (add your own here) comes another package of live material from guitar icon **Jimi Hendrix**. As with the aforementioned, chroniclers have been out to catch every note, every nuance of Hendrix's oeuvre (see "Reviews" July '90), *Stages* (Reprise 9 26732-2), a compact, four-CD package appearing to consist of mostly new material, formalizes Jimi's intriguing ascent from hip popster to bona fide experimentalist in four live sets.

You could say that only Hendrix freaks need apply (yours truly not being one of them), especially given that many songs are redone (overdone?) here: four takes each of "Fire" and "Purple Haze," three "Foxy Lady"s, two of "Voodoo Child," "Hey Joe," "I Don't Live Today," "Red House," etc. Limited repertoire notwithstanding, as we get further and further from the origins of this music, it becomes apparent that—as in the case of, say, Coltrane—this kind of virtuosic playing is rare indeed. New rock music with soul (some are calling it hip-hop) is again beginning to get an audience through bands like Living Colour, MC 900 Ft. Jesus, Fishbone, Sonny Sharrock, and 24-7 Spyz; but if you want some of its music in seed form, *Stages* might just be a good place to start.

The sound quality of *Stockholm 67* (31:38: ★★½) suggests Reprise delved into somebody's bootleg bin, what with the funky, club-like sound. A swing through his soon-to-be pop classics, the longest cut on this skimpy CD is a 5:15 "Purple Haze." The first three discs are with the Experience, including bassist Noel Redding and drummer Mitch Mitchell, *Stockholm* having been recorded at the tail end of the "Summer of Love" and after the band's celebrated Monterey Pop Festival appearance in June. Notables include lots of wah-wah, a pre-*Electric Ladyland* take of Jimi's "Burning Of The Midnight Lamp," and a playful version of the Beatles' "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" that opens the set.

Paris 68 (50:33: ★★★★★) has even more of a bootleg sound, but is more focused and accomplished. The blues have come to the forefront, including a strong reading of Muddy Waters' "Catfish Blues," reworked later on as Jimi's "Voodoo Chile." Hendrix's style of playing shows more bravado and intensity as he starts to dismantle songs he undoubtedly played over and over. Likewise, *San Diego 69* (60:31: ★★★★★½) pushes the blues frame-



Jimi: unprocessed

MIKE POLILLO

work of the band to another level, a rambling "Red House" clocking in at a glorious 12:30. "Spanish Castle Magic/Sunshine Of Your Love," another extended cut (9:50), includes a Mitchell drum interlude and fierce guitar jamming, Hendrix sounding relaxed yet driven whether he's playing it straight or with tons of feedback. Sound quality is *much* improved, and in stereo.

"The Cry Of Love" band was a half-step away from the Experience, as Redding was replaced by Billy Cox. On *Atlanta 70* (54:47: ★★★★★), the band at times sounds stiff and sluggish, tunes like "Spanish Castle Magic" in need of a facelift. One is reminded of Hendrix's guitar connection to heavy metal here: Even when he was covering awfully familiar territory, his electric, by-the-boards sound was more spontaneous and alive than much of heavy metal's arthritic, derivative, and conservative riffs and runs. On this set, recorded two months before his death, on July 4, Jimi had to play the "Star Spangled Banner." It was raunchy, unsettling, restless, risk-taking stuff. As for the rest of the material here, it's hard to pass up the rambling, funky, jazzy "Hear My Train A Comin'" and yet another take on "Voodoo Child," both offered as extended numbers—one of the advantages of hearing Jimi Hendrix live, unprocessed like so many jazz and blues musicians. Sound quality is good stereo, a notch below the '69 set. As Hendrix described his music in '67: "It's not pure pop, but if you say that it's R&B with roots both in pop music and jazz, you are as close to the truth as possible." (reviewed on CD) **DB**

West Coast Heat

by Bill Shoemaker

The first recordings in 1969 of pianist **Horace Tapscott** and the quartet co-led by clarinetist **John Carter** and trumpeter **Bobby Bradford** undermined the stereotypes of West Coast jazz, and challenged the New York fire-music establishment's exclusive franchise. The CD reissue of Carter and Bradford's *Seeking* (hat ART 6085; 46:56: ★★★★★), and material from two Flying Dutchman sessions on *West Coast Hot* (Novus 3107-2-N; 70:52: ★★★★★)—Tapscott's entire *The Giant Is Awakened* and 4/5ths of Carter and Bradford's *Flight For Four*—offer a timely retrospective, especially with the concurrent release of Tapscott's *The Dark Tree (Volume 1—hat ART CD 6053; 59:38: ★★★★★/Volume 2—hat ART CD 6083; 67:44: ★★★★★)*, 1989 club recordings featuring Carter.



H. L. LINDENMAIER

Bobby Bradford: lyrical swinger

Despite the easy comparison, the assets of Carter and Bradford's quartet—which recorded *Seeking for Revelation* as the New Art Jazz Ensemble—were markedly different than Ornette Coleman's. Carter, who displays equal facility on alto, tenor, clarinet, and flute on these early recordings, was, unlike Coleman, a true multi-instrumentalist. Bradford was by far the most lyrically swinging post-bop trumpeter of the day. Tom Williamson stylistically splits the difference between Charlie Haden and Scott LaFaro, and drummer Bruz Freeman adeptly handles the clipped rhythms, straight-up swing, and moody brush work required of him. Additionally, Ornette's patented lexicon was only one of many compositional tools Carter and Bradford employed. Bradford's "Song For The Unsung," the closer on *Seeking*, has a bluesy head and walking-bass foundation that could have fit on a Shorter-era Messengers album. Ballads such as *Flight's* "Woman" and *Seeking's* "Karen On Monday" are more harmonically conventional than Ornette's. Even when the surfaces of their work are strikingly Colemanesque—such as Carter's "Sticks And Stones" on *Seeking*, which continues to be listed as "Sticks And Bones" on the CD reissue of *Clarinet Summit Volumes I&II* (India Navigation IN 1062; 76:41: ★★★★★)—it's a stretch to call them derivative.

Tapscott has defied easy categorization for over 20 years. His compositions are as likely to be hinged on waltz time or melodies tinged



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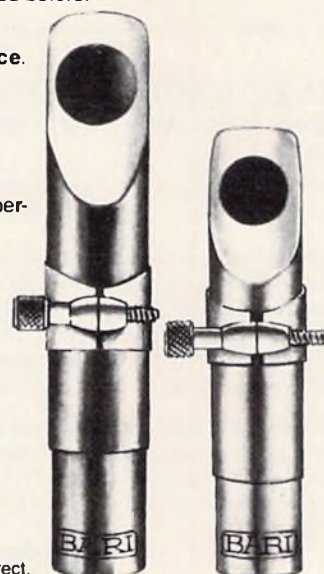
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with sentiment as they are on propulsive vamps and jagged themes. Stylistically, his playing is all over the map—from Waldron-like distillations to Tynesque power. He tenaciously anchors tempo and form, often with elemental left-hand ostinati, and often for far longer than it takes to make the point. His best work pivots on sudden, exciting transitions in technique and mood, as on *Volume 2*'s "A Dress For Renee," the set's only unaccompanied solo.

Giant is usually cited for debuting altoist Arthur Blythe, whose already matured, hard-edged tone and contoured lines are constantly engaging. But, a second reason for *Giant*'s legendary status is the polyrhythmic fireworks of longtime Tapscott drummer Everett Brown, Jr., who would have received worldwide recognition if he had ventured out of L.A. Another distinctive aspect is the use of two bassists, David Bryant and Walter Savage, Jr., who supply plenty of textured counterpoint.

The club recordings, which also feature bassist Cecil McBee and drummer Andrew Cyrille, include long stretches of inspired improvisational interplay. Carter appears on every track on *Volume 1*, but on only two out of five on *Volume 2*, including another reading of the title composition, which opens the first disc—a third take can be heard on the sampler, *Kimus #4* (hat ART 16004). Carter's simply masterful throughout, woody and throaty in the low and mid registers, and utterly piercing in his extraordinary high register.

Carter's central role in forming the Clarinet Summit with Jimmy Hamilton, Alvin Batiste, and David Murray is another rich chapter of his legacy. Their svelte, velvet voicings on Ellington chestnuts, their spirited dovetailing on "Honeysuckle Rose," and their no-holds-barred readings of originals by Carter, Batiste, and Murray make for a vital retelling of jazz history that the CD generation needs to hear. (all reviewed on CD) **DB**



Sonny Rollins

HERE'S TO THE PEOPLE—Milestone 9194: *Why Was I Born?*; *I Wish I Knew*; *Here's To The People*; *Doc Phil*; *Someone To Watch Over Me*; *Young Roy*; *Lucky Day*; *Long Ago And Far Away*. (54:42)

Personnel: Rollins, tenor sax; Roy Hargrove, trumpet (cuts 2,6); Clifton Anderson, trombone (3-4,7); Jerome Harris, electric guitar (1,3-5,7,8); Mark Soskin, piano; Bob Cranshaw, electric bass; Steve Jordan (1,3,5,7-8), Al Foster (2,6), Jack DeJohnette (4), drums.

★★★

Sonny needs a producer besides himself and Mrs. Rollins, 'cause one of the greats is making records that are only good. Two of three tunes he wrote here are nice—the anthemic "Roy" and "Doc," an aggressive romp over a two-note seesaw bass. And he steams mightily through the opener for its entire six-and-a-half minutes; it's not classic, but it's good enough to help you ignore Cranshaw's sonically flat electric bass.

An outside producer might question the bland unisons and harmonizations Rollins and trombonist Anderson play. Or wonder why Harris, timbrally and harmonically adventurous elsewhere, always sounds straitjacketed with Sonny. Or point out that, as Rollins had already quoted "Farmer In The Dell" twice on "Lucky

Day," maybe he shouldn't toss it into "Why Was I Born?" too.

Rollins has kept changing—for example, he has changed his tone to the current harsh and brittle one, an acquired taste. Still, he's in a comfy rut—he needs players who challenge him more than his regulars, or jejune guests like Hargrove, sounding shaky here.

Is it presumptuous of a mere critic to advise the tenor colossus? Hell, yes. But it sounds like someone has to. (reviewed on CD)

—Kevin Whitehead



Bruce Cockburn

NOTHING BUT A BURNING LIGHT—Columbia 47983: *Dream Like Mine*; *Kit Carson*; *Mighty Trucks Of Midnight*; *Soul Of A Man*; *Great Big Love*; *One Of The Best Ones*; *Somebody Touched Me*; *Cry Of A Tiny Babe*; *Actions Speak Louder*; *Indian Wars*; *When It's Gone, It's Gone*; *Child Of The Wind*. (60:23)

Personnel: Cockburn, guitar, vocals; T Bone Burnett, guitar (cuts 5, 7); Booker T. Jones, organ; Larry Klein, Michael Been, electric bass; Edgar Meyer, acoustic bass; Jim Keltner, Denny Fongheiser (5, 9), drums; Michael Blair, Ralph Forbes, percussion (5, 9, 11); Mark O'Connor, violin (6, 10-12); Sam Phillips (1, 5, 8), Jackson Browne (5, 10), background vocals.

★★★★

For two decades, Canadian folk-rocker Cockburn has been steadily building up an impressive songbook. This, his first album recorded south of the (Canadian) border, may be his most satisfying collection to date. Strong, memorable songs are mated to a generally appealing persona of gritty folksiness. It doesn't hurt that T Bone Burnett was behind the production wheel, or that scul veteran Booker T. Jones supplies nearly constant textural companionship on his organ.

Cockburn has found ways of dealing with his Christianity in his songs without stepping onto a soapbox. While religious convictions are certainly at the fore in "Cry Of A Tiny Babe," Cockburn most often artfully fuses imagery of human affection and spiritual love. The somebody of "Somebody Touched Me" could be either a lover or a deity. The lovely melody gracing "One Of The Best Ones" props up Cockburn's handy wordsmithing, as he sings "there are eight million mysteries in the naked body . . . there are nine million names of God."

Cockburn is one of the undersung heroes in the fading art of the well-tuned song. (reviewed on CD) —Josef Woodard

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The Real Kenton Canon

by Art Lange

Time has quenched the great Kenton controversy since his death in 1979; so much so that, unless you were there at the time (and, truth to tell, for the most part I wasn't), one wonders what all the shouting was about. It's easy to forget just how imposing a figure **Stan Kenton** was on the big band scene throughout the '40s, '50s, and '60s. (By the 1970s, his powers diminished, his adventurous nature quelled in a struggle for survival, his orchestra filled with competent but far from transcendent young players, he became the unfortunate model for countless dreary "stage bands" in schools around the



Kenton: dazzling highs, monstrous lows

country.) But in his heyday he was canonized, or vilified—everyone had an opinion, and there was no middle ground. Everything he did seemed larger than life. He made enormous amounts of money—and threw much of it away on grandiose orchestral ventures. Musically, he reached dazzling highs, and monstrous lows.

Though blessed with an amazing list of high-quality soloists over the years, each Kenton orchestra nevertheless lived or died on the strength of its compositions. As a result, Kenton's career can conveniently be broken down into periods, as arrangers (given various instrumentations to work with) provided each band with different personalities—his earliest popularity primarily on the basis of his own charts, the flashy "Progressive Jazz" of Pete Rugolo and Shorty Rogers, the 40-plus member Innovations in Modern Music orchestra, the Bill Russo/Bill Holman years, the Johnny Richards-fed mellophonium band, etc. Though they recorded prolifically, most of the important records have long been hard to find, and then programmed in mish-mosh fashion. To truly understand the Kenton legacy today, what's needed is a series of reissues, programmed by arranger.

And that's just what the ever-industrious mail-order Mosaic Records (35 Melrose Pl, Stamford CT 06902) has given us with *Stan Kenton: The Complete Capitol Recordings Of The Holman And Russo Charts* (Mosaic MD4-136; 59:40/59:34/61:06/65:34: ★★★★★), a meaty hunk of Kentonalia from what is arguably his

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most substantial period, 1950-55 (with a double handful of later Holman charts as anti-climax). Chronologically, Russo comes first, beginning with a pair of classically-inspired pieces for the Leviathan Innovations orchestra and one ("Halls Of Brass") incredibly virtuosic piece of writing for the same sans strings and saxes, which inaugurated his reputation for experimental, "intellectual" works. Two years later Holman debuted with an equally formal contrapuntal study ("Invention For Guitar And Trumpet"), but soon slid into the style of swinging sectional arranging.

But—and it's a *big* but—the biggest pleasure this boxed set brings is in shattering the myths and mischaracterizations plaguing the band over these years. Yes, the "symphonic" Russo is fully represented here ("Dusk," "A Theme Of Four Values," "Edgon Heath,"

"Thisbe," et al.), but there are also a surprising number of jazz arrangements of great subtlety (such as the gorgeous "Improvisation" and "My Lady," featuring exquisite Lee Konitz) and swing (his "Portrait Of A Count"—not Basie, but Candoli, and the cool sound of "I've Got You Under My Skin" emphasizing the saxes instead of the brass in a quite unKentonian mode) and even, for fun, cheesy slices of commercialism ("And The Bull Walked Around, Olay"—ugh). Ditto for Holman. "Bags" is a sample of undiluted Basie, and "Fascinating Rhythm" offers an optimism thrown in the face of Kenton's notorious angst. But there's also Holman in a "serious" mood with his through-written "Theme And Variations," Tristanoid evocations "Of All Things" and "Lover Man" (more sublime Konitz), and the classic "Zoot."

Mention of the latter brings to mind just how

many excellent soloists can be heard here—Zoot Sims, hot Conte Condoli and Frank Rosolino, the stratospheric Maynard Ferguson, brief, vivid appearances by altoists Davey Schildkraut, Lennie Niehaus, and Charlie Mariano, and especially, so much marvelous Konitz. Then there's a mini-set of tunes by the legendary Chris Connor (and a few later on by the sometimes painfully direct Ann Richards), and, I suspect, more than a few discoveries and surprises among the 72 performances collected herein. Pretentious moments? Sure, but keep in mind these people were not merely trying to entertain, but to invent an idiom.

Kenton may be branded forever as an extremist, but hearing this variety of colors, moods, and compositional attitudes reminds us that everything may not be as black and white as we remember it to be. **DB**

Fusion Fracas

by Robin Tolleson

At presstime, sour economic conditions seem to be having little effect on the selection of electric jazz in the market. There are many faces of fusion to be sure, and more importantly, a real musical wealth—the textures are richer than ever and the teeth are bared. **Chroma**, a bandful of ringers, is quite encouraging with *Music On The Edge* (CTI R2 79475; 61:34: ★★★★★½), as is fiery guitarist **Jean-Paul Bourelly** on *Trippin'* (Enemy EMY-127-2; 55:10: ★★★★★½).

Jim Beard's lush keyboards are at work all through Chroma's music, but he steps out of the way on "Lessons" to let guitarists Mike Stern and Jon Herington rip. Percussionist Mino Cinelu emerges with a very interesting composition, "Pwotege Nou," and the moody "Gazed." Randy Brecker's "Squids," previously heard on the BB Band's *Heavy Metal Bebop*, might fry even hotter here with drummer Dennis Chambers working the kitchen, and Stern's "Upside Downside" is a bonafide burner. Creed Taylor produced numerous all-star sessions in the 1970s, but few with better results than this one. It's truly a group effort.

If Jimi Hendrix were putting out stuff like Jean-Paul Bourelly's *Trippin'*, no one would be surprised or complaining. Besides paying those obvious respects, some of JP's melodic invention is similar to that of Automatic Man's Bayete, and his outrageousness brings George Duke to mind at times. This is super-charged funk, the latest sounds off the street in a hip-hop stew, led by JP's commando guitar. The vocals have an offhandedness that works, and the instrumentals are jagged and haunting marches over some rugged rhythmic terrain. He can curve out a lovely (scorching) ballad, too.

Steve Smith most recently filled the drum chair in Steps Ahead, and his group **Vital Information** has featured burning talent ever since the skinsman's Journey days. *Vitalive* (Manhattan CDP 7 96692-2; 62:57: ★★★★★½) was recorded in 1989, and released in Europe last year on VeraBra Records. The group's first acoustic bassist, Larry Grenadier, lends a



Steve Smith: uninspired

JAMES HASTINGS

slightly different feel to the proceedings, but his tone lost some color in the recording. Larry Schneider brings a new-found depth on sax, and Smith shows his versatility as they deliver some frantic open box on "Mac Attack," but several performances (some previously released material) seem rather uninspired for a "live" recording. There are flashes of magic, but not a sustained drive throughout.

Film And The BB's are kind of an underground fusion story, having first fashioned a national following among CD audiophiles, but now all fusion aficionados seem to know of them. *Vintage BB's* (DMP 486; 77:47: ★★★★★½) gives a blast or two from five early BB's albums on DMP plus two new tracks. Bassist Jimmy Johnson cares about the sound of each note he plays, and really fills it up. Drummer Bill Berg is a fine finesse player with some power. Dick Oatts' sax works well with the keyboards of Billy Barber on "Heart Throb," as the two of them handle some tough unison parts with a characteristic subtle ease. Nice moods and dynamic playing by all.

Ripingtons was gradually becoming less of the "blowing" band it was set up as and more like a forum for Russ Freeman's ideas, acted out with a bank of sequencers. Happily, with *Curves Ahead* (GRP 9651; 48:11: ★★★★★) the band concept is again alive and well. Freeman is still the main cog, as writer and instrumental focus (all kinds of guitars,

keyboards, and some bass), but with the increased live playing (drummers Tony Morales and Omar Hakim, percussionist Steve Reid); and with the new twist of a three-horn section, there are better pickings for the ear this time out. It's still a little too pop-oriented for some jazz tastes, but it's a few steps in the right direction.

Tenorman **Richard Elliot** has his moments of convincing, soulful blues during *On The Town* (Manhattan CDP 7 966872; 55:06: ★★½); they make me wish he would vary his tone just a bit more and really move in for the kill. Elliot's similar attack on many tunes sometimes sounds like a lack of conviction. On tracks like "Stiletto Heels" and "On The Town" that could have really gotten cooking, a drum machine spits out the same beat each measure for the entire song. On the other hand, "In Your Face" is a hard-charging piece of funk with a live rhythm section, and catches the saxman growling and biting. It makes the previously mentioned tracks sound like filler.

On *Mutatis Mutandis* (I.R.S. X2-13112; 41:07: ★★), **Ronnie Montrose** is back as the thinking blue-collar man's guitar here, playing with authority and—on tracks like "Heavy Agenda" and "Velox"—with a lot of soul. There's a certain amount of pomposity on overblown numbers like "Greed Kills," an almost-humorous plodder. But a lovely track like "Mercury," with a more acoustic groove sound from the leader and a subtle arranging sense, make it worth hearing. The bigger-than-life sounds work against it at times, but Montrose is able to rein things in before they get out of hand. The drum technology is impressive.

Vinnie Moore's *Meltdown* (Relativity 88561-1067-2; 50:20: ★★) is a lesson in rock pyrotechnics, spawned undoubtedly by the recent success of guitar whizzes Satriani and Vai. And believe me, it rocks. Perhaps if everything weren't hammering so hard, if Joe Franco played the date with a little more finesse, if the bassist were a bit more involved as a sparring partner, this would be a more completely filling musical entrée. As it is, Moore's potential is unquestionable, but you can hear as much music in one Jeff Beck track as you can on this entire date. (all reviewed on CD) **DB**

The R&B Equation, Part 2

by Dan Ouellette

In the mid-to-late '40s, major record companies balked at tapping into the potential gold mine of new black music that came to be known as r&b. Post-WWII artists eclectically melding the blues tradition with swing, gospel, and the full menu of New Orleans-influenced styles baffled the major labels which had neatly segregated black artists into two well-defined—if not restrictive—categories of jazz/swing and race/regional. R&b acts were therefore relegated to a second-class music citizenry, relying on the owners of independent



Fats Domino: igniting flames

labels, many of whom thankfully not only recognized how invigorating and powerful this music was but also had the courage to take risks in promoting it. (History was to repeat itself 30 years later when indie labels played a crucial role in revitalizing rock music by issuing albums recorded by young and incredibly energetic new wave and punk groups.)

One of the most successful of the r&b indies was Imperial Records, formed in 1947 by West Coast business entrepreneur Lew Chudd. The Imperial catalog is now owned by EMI, which has been diligently mining the vaults, digitally dusting off the r&b relics, and issuing superb CD compilations of such artists as Fats Domino, T-Bone Walker, and Albert Collins (the latter recording for Imperial after Chudd sold the label to Liberty Records in 1963).

Imperial's most popular star was **Fats Domino**, who recorded for the label from 1949 through 1962, selling over 63 million records and garnering 23 gold records. EMI's superlative 100-song, four-CD box, *They Call Me The Fat Man . . . Antoine "Fats" Domino, The Legendary Imperial Recordings* (EMI E2-7-96784-2; 59:49/53:28/52:52/58:40:★★★★★), gives a full sweep of Domino's most important years as a recording artist, including his early days when, as a New Orleans-based pianist, he helped usher in the rock & roll era by turning up the r&b energy level a notch and igniting flames across his

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keyboard. The first disc is loaded with great Domino boogies, stomps, hops, and ballads and features his first hit, "The Fat Man," the amazing "Ain't It A Shame" (his first pop crossover hit), the Creole scorcher "Hey! La Bas Boogie," a near note-for-note cover of Professor Longhair's classic gumbo tune "Mardi Gras In New Orleans," and the Basie-inspired instrumental, "Domino Stomp (Twistin' The Stomp)." In addition to showing Domino's maturation as both a vibrant vocalist and a romping pianist, the first disc introduces how important the influence of New Orleans music—rumba bass lines, peppery drum rhythms, rolling piano riffs, and parade-band brass—was in Domino's material.

The other three discs are just as exciting a listen with the exception of the tail end of the third, where there are several tunes marred by a string section (no doubt a concession to the white-bread music popular in 1960). Highlights of disc two include Domino's classic "Blueberry Hill," the wildly stomping "I'm Walking," and the r&b cooker "I'm In Love Again" that features a great tenor sax solo by Lee Allen. Wading through the gems of disc three you find gold nuggets in the rockabilly-tinged "I'm Gonna Be A Wheel Someday," the rousing "Whole Lotta Loving," and the best of the bunch, "I Hear You Knocking," recorded in

1958 but unreleased until 1961 as a B-side to Domino's rippling cover of Hank Williams' "Jambalaya" (included on disc four). The final disc features Domino's music from the early '60s when, because of the changing tastes of listeners, hits were hard to come by. However, the music is no less energetic or inspired than the earlier material.

Pioneering electric blues guitarist and a father of modern blues, **T-Bone Walker** also worked with Domino's producer David Bartholomew and band when he signed on to Imperial after stints with other labels. The two-CD, 52-track *T-Bone Walker: The Complete Imperial Recordings, 1950-1954* (EMI CDP-7-96737-2; 70:18/68:48: ★★★★★) is a sampling of Walker's raw and expressive r&b steeped in traditional blues and flavored by swing (With the exception of a couple alternate takes, the material on this set is also included on the six-CD Mosaic box—see "Reviews" Oct. '90.) His guitar to the song is like soft butter on fresh bread as he plays with unrehearsed emotion on boogies, jumps, shuffles, and relaxed swing numbers. He gently picks a sweet tone from his Gibson hollow-body, effortlessly strumming emotive jazz chordings and setting a flurry of fluid runs into motion. There are lots of swinging horns and blues-inflected jazzy sax breaks throughout, but it's Walker's mas-

tery in delivering brilliant, end-measure doodlings and driving licks that makes this collection. While Walker's most famous tune, "Call It Stormy Monday," isn't included here (the Black & White label released it in 1947), other noteworthy numbers like "Party Girl," "I'll Always Be In Love With You," and "Get These Blues Off Me" are. As for a killer instrumental, go straight to "Strollin' With Bone." This set inspired me to dust off my Gibson ES-175.

Fastforward to 1969-70, when **Albert** "Master of the Telecaster" **Collins** recorded three excellent LPs, reissued in a two-CD, 36-song box, *Albert Collins, The Complete Imperial Recordings* (EMI CDP-7-96740-2; 51:08/49:03: ★★★★★½). While recording for tiny Texas labels in the '50s and '60s, Collins developed his distinctive r&b that was influenced by the swing of jump blues, the smoothness of soul ballads, the perkiness of stutter-steppin' funk, and the hard edge of rock. Collins' distinctive sound is derived partly from open-chord minor tunings and partly from his fingerpicking style, which allows him to sparkle with fast-action exclamatory runs. Many of the collection's compositions are rollicking instrumentals, but Collins also sings slow, lowdown blues like "Do What You Want To Do," where he fully expresses his pain with stinging jabs on his axe. (all reviewed on CD) **DB**

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1 Jimmy Cleveland

"Marie" (from *A MAP OF JIMMY CLEVELAND*, Mercury, 1957).

That's a bouncier version of Marie than Tommy Dorsey's; TD did it real lyrical. That's gotta be Jimmy Cleveland: the finesse and control in the upper register, the gorgeous sound. Trademarks are the way he ends a note with a personal vibrato and that lip slur up an octave. 4½. For mastery of the horn and controlling what he plays, he's tops. Innovation can come with phrasing, sound, rhythm, or harmony. He innovated with phrasing and tone quality, but his rhythm and harmony weren't anything fresh.

2 Craig Harris & Tailgater Tales

"Shelter Suite" (from *SHELTER*, JMT, 1987).

That's a didgeridoo, an aboriginal drone rhythm instrument from Australia, 40,000 years old. That's Craig Harris' "Shelter." He and I played didgeridoo-ets in Lester Bowie's Brass Fantasy. He plays it excellently. I think Craig's real talent is as a composer. He draws from Ellington and Mingus, but he's got his own thing. He hasn't done the homework to explore his predecessors' mastery of the trombone; you can't turn your back on it just to be original. You can only assimilate it and step beyond it, and then be original. Composition: 5, trombone: 1½.

3 Frank Rosolino

"Flamingo" (from *THE ROSOLINO CONNECTION*, Affinity, 1956).

That's Frank Rosolino. He was influenced by J.J. [Johnson] and though you rarely hear it, you could the way he opened his solo. Then Frank's trademark [arpeggios] clicked in: that's lip flexibility! He could do it musically—not like exercises on the overtone series. Frank Rosolino was unique in the world of trombones. He was the exception to the rule that lip players lack rhythmic accuracy. He swung his butt off! He played almost totally by ear: he could read, but he'd put that personal thing into each performance. 5.

Every jazz trombonist is different. You use mouth and tongue to articulate each note, and everybody's mouth is different. You don't sound quite like anyone else unless you're making a conscious effort to mimic somebody. J.J. tongues everything, Mangelsdorff pops notes with his lips, Frank combines. Classical players are trained to tongue exactly the same: they don't want individuality in an orchestra.

STEVE TURRE

by Fred Bouchard

Steve Turre plays his slide trombone with a robust warmth and traditional mind. A brass master in the bands of Ray Charles, Woody Shaw, Art Blakey, R. R. Kirk, Thad Jones/Mel Lewis, Lester Bowie, Turre has also toured with Dexter Gordon, Slide Hampton, McCoy Tyner. Lately featured with the Dizzy Gillespie United Nation Orchestra, Turre, like some earthy triton, honks his conches—as much his trademark as pigtail and goatee. Prominent in Latin bands (Fort Apache, Celia Cruz, Tito Puente), Turre was a regular in the *Saturday Night Live* band as early as 1986. A recent string interest, prompting a tantalizing conjunction of jazz and string quartets on *Fire And Ice* (Slash), is pursued in new recordings, including *Right There* (Antilles—see "Reviews" Nov. '91).

Turre beetee'd (his second) during a spring stint at Scullers Jazz Club at Boston's Guest Quarters Suite Hotel with Benny Green, Ben Riley, and Da-



MICHAEL WILDERMAN

vid Williams. He homed right in on trombonists and their solos, offering a personal primer on the art of the big horn. (Non-leader trombonists' names follow the titles below.) A music educator at Manhattan School of Music and William Paterson College, Turre here waxes didactic and historic but avoids the pedantic. His post-identification comments are not recorded.

4 King Oliver

"New Orleans Shout" (from *NEW YORK SESSIONS*, Bluebird, 1929) Jimmy Archey.

A very early big band arrangement! Ooh, let me hear that again! They still had tuba and banjo. Boy, I don't know who that was. I couldn't hear a trademark to his style, but I haven't heard a lot of his generation. I don't think he was an Ellington trombonist. For that early blues style, 4½. Lots of players could really tell you a story, touch you, playing within an octave—like Tricky Sam Nanton. And do it in one chorus! Today, lots of guys play as high as the sky and as low as the bottom of the piano—just to get your attention.

5 Ray Anderson

"Mona Lisa" (from *BLUES BRED IN THE BONE*, Gramavision, 1987).

He's squeezing up to those high notes, not nailing them on the head. I don't know who this is. He's not developed his tone quality. It sounds tongue in cheek. My first impression was corny, then I laughed a little bit, then it sounded like background music. Jazz is America's classical music. Of course you have fun with it, but it's deep. The blues is not superficial. You let it all hang out, but

humbly. It should touch you with innocence, not pretense. This strikes me as being laughable, if enjoyable. It didn't move me. If you took away that extreme high range, it would be unremarkable. For being different, 3½.

6 Phil Wilson & Vic Dickenson

"Lonesome Old Town" (from *BOSTON-NEW YORK AXIS*, Famous Door, 1978).

That was Phil Wilson—his warm tone and vibrato. He has a really good feeling for ballads. I heard him play this song live with Woody Herman when I was in high school. Let me listen further. Who's this? That walkin' on eggshell breathiness—that's Vic! Even with a straight mute. This makes sense: Phil loves Vic. Without question: Vic Dickenson—pure feeling. He is the epitome of the stylist: every note, every phrase means something—no excess baggage. Complete taste yet complete feeling yet he lets it hang out. That's what superior artistry is all about: body, mind, and spirit. 5 stars for beauty, contrast of styles. The vehicle chosen was appropriate for the players' styles. If you had Phil and Vic play "Moment's Notice," they might not shine like they do here. It's important to know your forte and build your style around your strengths.

DB