

15th ANNUAL STUDENT MUSIC AWARDS

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YOUNG LIONS

Have They Delivered?

Joe Zawinul's
New Grooves

Sittin' In With GRP's
All-Star Big Band

To Gil With Love,
Composer Maria Schneider

Young Lion
Roy Hargrove





MITCHELL SEIDEL

16 ROY HARGROVE & CO. Have They Delivered?

Having been "lionized" by the press, record companies, and much of the jazz audience, the "Young Lions" of resurgent bebop have been around long enough to measure their growth. Many of them offer up their own progress reports for Larry Birnbaum.

Cover photograph by Mitchell Seidel.

FEATURES

21 JOE ZAWINUL Groove Gangster

In the spirit of the times, keyboardist/bandleader Joe Zawinul is leading his Zawinul Syndicate into the relatively uncharted waters of electric world music. Fred Shuster takes sight.

24 MARIA SCHNEIDER To Gil, With Love

1991 Gil Evans Fellowship winner Maria Schneider struts her stuff as a new writer/arranger to be reckoned with. Bart Marantz reports.

26 GRP ALL-STARS Big Band Bash

In a celebration of the now-10-year-old jazz label, many of the foremost musicians for GRP come together for a big band brouhaha. Josef Woodard was there.

30 THE 1992 DOWN BEAT STUDENT MUSIC AWARDS

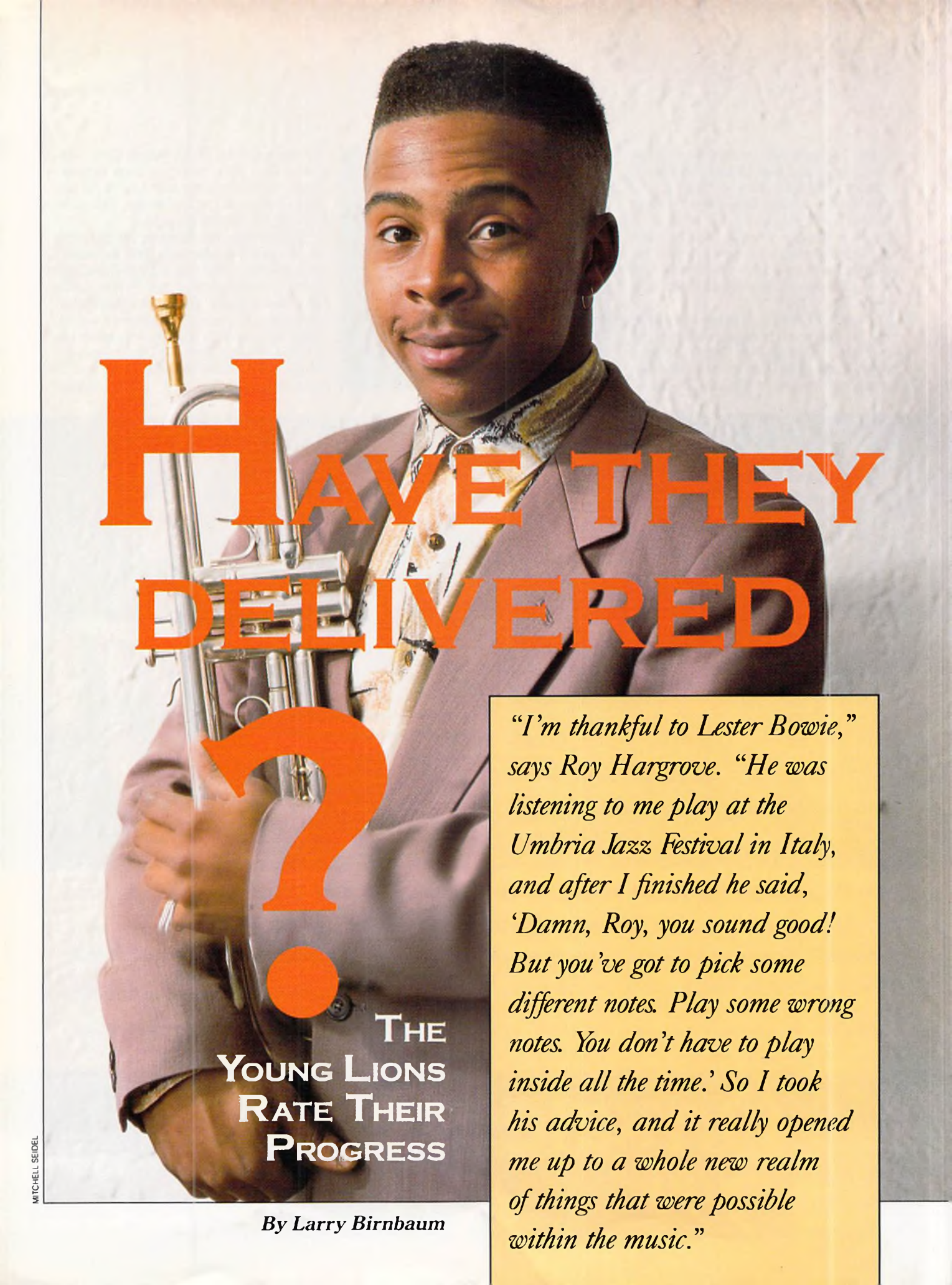
Our 15th annual "DB" contest results for superior junior high, high school, and college musical performances show who the movers and shakers of tomorrow's music will be. In addition, the first-ever Down Beat Achievement Awards for Jazz Education are given.

DEPARTMENTS

- 6 ON THE BEAT, by Bruce Lundvall.
- 8 CHORDS & DISCORDS
- 10 NEWS
- 13 RIFFS
- 35 RECORDS & CD REVIEWS:
Arturo Sandoval; Wayne Horvitz/The President; Robin Holcomb; Jimmie Lunceford; American Jazz Orchestra; Various Artists: Whose Tradition?; Donald Harrison; Dr. Michael White; Stan Getz/Kenny Barron; Little Village; James Clay; Kronos Quartet; Mike Cain; Glen Moore/Larry Karush/Glen Velez; Adrian Legg; Henry Butler; Carol Fran & Clarence Hollimon; Diane Schuur; Don Pullen; Tom Verlaine; Marc Beacco; Ernie Watts; Lin Halliday; Raymond Scott; Cruel Frederick.
- 56 BLINDFOLD TEST: Charles Fambrough, by John Diliberto.
- 57 VIDEO REVIEWS: "Gaze Of The Ages, Part 1," by Kevin Whitehead.
- 60 CAUGHT: Joe Henderson & Freddie Hubbard, by Larry Birnbaum; Tito Puente & Co., by Juan Carlos Coto; David Murray Octet, by John Corbett; Sonny Sharrock, by Jon Andrews.
- 64 PRO SESSION: "So Many Drummers . . . So Little Time"—A Louie Bellson Master Class," by John McDonough.
- 65 PRO SHOP: "Computerized Music Assistants," by Jeffrey D. Waggoner.
- 67 AD LIB: "The State Of Jazz Education," by Bunky Green.
- 70 SOUND BYTES/AUDITIONS:
Musical tidbits/young musicians deserving recognition.



HYOU VIELZ



HAVE THEY DELIVERED

THE
YOUNG LIONS
RATE THEIR
PROGRESS

"I'm thankful to Lester Bowie," says Roy Hargrove. "He was listening to me play at the Umbria Jazz Festival in Italy, and after I finished he said, 'Damn, Roy, you sound good! But you've got to pick some different notes. Play some wrong notes. You don't have to play inside all the time.' So I took his advice, and it really opened me up to a whole new realm of things that were possible within the music."

By Larry Birnbaum

Wrong notes? Not inside? Could this really be Roy Hargrove, the hard-bop *wunderkind* Wynton Marsalis discovered at Dallas' Booker T. Washington High School, the teenaged trumpeter who sounded like Clifford and Freddie rolled into one, the neo-trad flame-keeper who attended Berklee on scholarships won through Musicfest U.S.A. (hosted by DB) and DB's Student Music Awards and cut a critically acclaimed major-label album at 20? But wait, there's more. "I've been checking out a lot of Ornette Coleman lately, and I changed the rhythm section of my band. I've even done a few experiments with a couple of hip-hoppers, little home projects in my apartment. I mean, that's what I came up listening to."

Now 22, with three albums—including the newly released *The Vibe* (BMG/Novus 63132)—under his belt, Hargrove has emerged as the point man for a jazz movement dubbed the Young Lions. Clean-cut, nattily dressed, and studious, they are the generation Marsalis made, and they bow to Wynton the way their predecessors genuflected to Miles. "The thing I dig about Wynton is that he educates the audience," says Hargrove, "people who would not otherwise know anything about the music." Even though each of the musicians interviewed for this story—all 30 or under—stressed the importance of mastering the tradition, *none* subscribed to Wynton's hard line against fusion and free jazz.

Still, hearing is believing, and skepticism abounds. Steve Lacy, who made the stylistic leap from Sidney Bechet to Cecil Taylor, has likened the current hard-bop resurgence to the trad revival of the '40s and '50s—an evolutionary dead end (see DB May '92). Avant-garde stalwart Henry Threadgill has complained that, for the first time in jazz history, "There are no young rebels. We don't even have a charlatan." And Freddie Hubbard told *The New York Times*, "It makes me feel funny to hear them playing ideas that I was playing in the '60s. The way they're playing it and phrasing it now, it's very clean, but it doesn't have the same spirit."

The bottom-line question on the lions is, have they delivered? In their own uncertain roar, the consensus is virtually unanimous: Not yet, but just give us time.

"Every young jazz musician is striving for what Wynton has achieved," says Joey DeFrancesco, the 21-year-old Philadelphian who recorded and toured with Miles Davis at 17 and went on to spark the current Hanunond organ revival. Like Hargrove, he won a *Down Beat* Student Music Award, a college scholarship, and a major-label contract, cutting four albums—*Reboppin'* (Columbia CK 48624) is the latest—before he could vote. "Wynton has been a role model for me," says DeFrancesco. "But I don't agree with everything he says, especially when he talks about Miles. Some people just wanted to hear Miles play ballads all night, and I'm one of them, but I respect his changes. I hope I change, too; it's just that I love straightahead swing, and I think that's true for a lot of the young players. There's so much great music behind us, it's hard to not emulate."

"Even before Wynton," says drummer Winard Harper, "there were young musicians trying to play this music—Bobby Watson, James Williams, Donald Brown, Kenny Washington, Curtis Lundy, Bill Saxton. But there are not a lot of opportunities for guys coming out of school to have a job and be working on their craft." Winard, 30, backed Betty Carter for four years while he and his trumpet-playing brother Philip organized the Harper Brothers Band, whose fourth album, *You Can Hide Inside The Music* (Verve 314 511 820), features veterans Jimmy Heath, Harry "Sweets" Edison, Jimmy McGriff, and Ernie Andrews. "If there are more bands," says Harper, "there are more working situations for all of us to learn. So regardless of whether Roy Hargrove, say, hasn't had a chance to work with anybody, if he has his own band out there, he's giving four or five other guys an opportunity to be working and learning how to play."



Benny Green: "We have a wealth of younger players—and we won't let each other slacken up."

It's important for younger musicians to have bands," agrees 29-year-old pianist Bennie Green, "to continue that ensemble heritage and not just focus on being soloists." Green's third album, *Testifyin': Live At The Village Vanguard* (Blue Note CDP 7 98171), features his trio with Carl Allen and Christian McBride. "I've been fortunate to have played with masters like Art Blakey, Betty Carter, and Freddie Hubbard, and I feel a responsibility to carry on this great tradition. That doesn't mean regurgitating what's already been done, it means developing our own individuality. I don't want to be a reminder of the past, I want to be part of a continuing legacy. But I

Justin Robinson (second from left) with: (l-r) Harper brothers Philip and Winard, Roy Hargrove. Says, Robinson: "If these guys stick to their guns... I think it will take a new direction."



think that jazz is headed in a very positive direction, because we have a wealth of younger players—Roy Hargrove is a good example—and we won't let each other slacken up."

"People say we're rehashing what's been done already, that it's a retrogression," says alto saxophonist Jesse Davis. "But I don't really see it that way." Davis, 26, discovered bebop in Ellis Marsalis' New Orleans classroom, jammed with Von Freeman in Chicago, copped an All-Star Award at Musicfest U.S.A. in Philadelphia, and spent three years in Illinois Jacquet's big band before cutting *Horn Of Passion* (Concord Jazz CCD-4465; see "Reviews" Dec. '91). "It can almost be looked upon as a renaissance," he says. "Everyone has a sense of tradition while trying to define themselves individually. But we're in a predicament, because so many guys have come before us, and there's so much information to contend with. I benefitted from jazz programs, but school can't give you the intangible things. To a degree, you're discouraged from forging your own path."

Christian McBride: "Eventually, we'll get into something different. Right now, I'm just trying to deal with the basics."



"We're just in a study period," says 20-year-old Christian McBride. "We're taking our time to find our own voices." Though he doesn't have a solo album, McBride is one of New York's busiest bassists, gigging regularly with Bobby Watson, Benny Golson, Freddie Hubbard, and Benny Green, and recording with many of his fellow lions. He's also played funk and fusion, and names James Brown as a primary influence. "Eventually, we'll get into something different. Right now, I'm just trying to deal with the basics—blues and swing—but sooner or later everything's going to move in a whole new direction."

"When I was small, I wanted to be just like Wynton," says trumpeter Marlon Jordan. "I studied his music back when he was recording high-energy jazz, and that's the direction I wanted to go, because you could play free but still be locked into something." The son of New Orleans avant-gardist-turned-music-professor Edward "Kidd" Jordan, brother of flutist Kent Jordan, nephew of clarinetist Alvin Batiste, and former pupil of Ellis Marsalis, Jordan, 21, pursues a modal course on his third Columbia album (at presstime, a late-summer release). "I would like to see young players stretch out and not be so traditional," he says, "because that's really not the music of our generation."

"I'm trying to be true to what's inside me," says alto prodigy Christopher Hollyday. "To satisfy myself and let people know who I am through my music." Among the first celebrated teenage tyros after Wynton, Hollyday, now 22, flaunts impassioned modalism and ambitious arrangements on his fourth major-label album, *And I'll Sing Once More* (BMG/Novus 01241-63133). "The whole idea for me is to be able to get up and just sing to the people, to completely open myself up and let them see my true personality," he says. "And the freer the music gets, the more options I have to use. I'd

like to get to the point where everything is just spontaneous, to really improvise rather than playing a bunch of licks."

"It's not a matter of playing inside or outside anymore, because both have been done," says Wisconsin-bred, Berklee-trained Geoff Keezer, 21, who assumed the piano chair in Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers on the recommendation of James Williams. His second album, *Here And Now* (Blue Note CDP 7 96691), features vibist Steve Nelson. "It's a matter of doing your homework," he says, "learning all you can, and then finding your own way of expressing yourself. Freedom in music means that you're able to play anything at any time and make it sound good. Freedom isn't about not having any sense of direction or not being aware of chords and rhythms. Freedom is when you have learned so much and amassed enough technique and facility on your instrument that you can play anything that comes to your mind."

"You don't have to play outside to be an innovator," seconds 23-year-old Harper Brothers alto saxist Justin Robinson, who's just released a solo album, *Justin Time* (Verve 314 513 254). "We're dealing with chord changes and forms and systematic styles that can still be developed. But young guys are going to bring young energy into whatever they do, and sooner or later it's going to kick in for them. If these guys stick to their guns and keep developing their craft and checking out the masters, I think it will take a new direction."

As a teenager, Robinson introduced jazz to his pianist friend Stephen Scott, who, by age 23, has accompanied Betty Carter, Ron Carter, Benny Golson, the Harper Brothers, and Wynton Marsalis. His solo debut is *Something To Consider* (Verve 849 557; see "Reviews" Nov. '91). "We got lost somewhere in the '70s," he says, "so we need to close the gap, just to find out where the music has been. But a lot of older cats are so bitter that they miss a lot of opportunities because they're holding a grudge against us. They feel that we don't respect them, and there's a lot of us who don't show that respect like we should, so they start to resent us."

"We all have a long way to go," says altoist Antonio Hart. "And there's been too much hype put on the young musicians." Hart, 23, sat in with Blakey and played a date with Diz but got most of his experience as Roy Hargrove's full-toned foil before waxing *For The First Time* (BMG/Novus 3120-2-N) as a leader. "It's unfortunate," he says, "that because of the record companies and media, we have a separation from the older musicians that was never there before. But the record contracts also allow us to get together with some of the musicians we want to learn from and to build a relationship where we can get together outside of the studio."

"I like the fact that I didn't get a record deal right away," says tenor saxist Javon Jackson, "because this way I was able to achieve a certain musicianship and maturity." Like Geoff Keezer, Jackson, 27, graduated from Berklee into Blakey's band. He's now with Freddie Hubbard, and his album *Me And Mr. Jones!* (Criss Cross 1053-CD) features Elvin Jones, along with James Williams and Christian McBride. "When you're basically a nobody with no experience and you're put in a position to make a major record and you blow it, the record companies don't care," he says. "They're going to drop you, and you'll go from the top to the bottom just that quickly."

One of jazz's few young lionesses, trumpeter Rebecca Coupe Franks, 30, faced more than the usual hurdles, but after frelancing with Latin, classical, and even circus bands, she landed an appearance at last year's Montreux festival and an album, *Suit Of Armor* (Justice JR 0901), with sidemen Kenny Barron, Buster Williams, Ben Riley, and Joe Henderson. "To this day you don't see women in jazz playing with great musicians in high-profile situations," Franks says. "It's hard to break in, and you can't just wait to be called on the phone, so I ended up just doing it on my own and going ahead. A lot of women have the potential to be great players and writers; it's just a matter of having the boys club take you seriously."

Some of the older and more assured young players are already broadening their scope, personalizing their sound with post-bop and fusion effects that reflect their own listening backgrounds and professional experience. Their music has an exploratory feel, and they express an ambivalence toward the prevailing emphasis on youth and historical consciousness. Hobbled by marketing trends and industry pressure, they keep one foot in the mainstream while dipping the other into uncharted waters, awaiting a shift in the current before taking a headlong plunge.

Rick Margitza: "I'm trying to carry on the tradition by singing it in my own voice."



"It's great that the music is getting more exposure," says tenor man Rick Margitza, "but some of the young players are so locked into the tradition that they can't see their way out of it." Margitza, 30, has worked with Maynard Ferguson, Peter Erskine, Airto Moreira and Flora Purim, and Miles Davis. A determined modernist, he's recorded three solo albums, the latest of which is *This Is New* (Blue Note CDP 7 97196). "It's a given that you have to understand the music of Charlie Parker and Louis Armstrong, but the thing about them is that they broke new ground all the time," he says. "I'm trying to carry on the tradition by singing it in my own voice, and I want to develop the compositional element. Maybe the music is going to change if you think more in terms of composition and structure."

"I'm drawing musical ideas from other places than just the jazz tradition," says Joey Calderazzo. The 27-year-old pianist has backed Margitza, Michael Brecker, and Bobby Watson, but he's never forgotten his rock and classical roots. His second album, *To Know One* (Blue Note CDP 7 98165), features Jack DeJohnette, Dave Holland, Jerry Bergonzi, and Branford Marsalis. "I've tossed around the idea of doing a real bebop record, but that's not what I'm about," he says. "When I'm at home I practice that stuff, but when I go out I want to play my own music. It's a great selling point to get these young kids playing like grown-up men, and people relate to the older styles. But that music has been played, and played better. The guys who played the stuff back then were innovating it."

Guitarist John Hart, 30, cut his teeth on rock and fusion before discovering Joe Pass, Grant Green, and Jim Hall. Since moving from Miami to New York in 1984, he's played with Lou Donaldson, Jaki Byard, Nick Brignola, Jimmy Smith, Jack McDuff, and Terumasa Hino. *Trust* (CDP 7 95206) is his second album for Blue Note. "I'm trying to concentrate on straightahead playing," Hart says. "But the older I get, the more eclectic my tastes are becoming. It's dangerous to treat jazz like classical music, where you have interpretations of a certain period rather than creating your own style. In the past, these strong personalities, like Charlie

Parker, have come along, and it may take somebody like that to change the direction of jazz, but I'd like to see a combination of all the styles and elements."

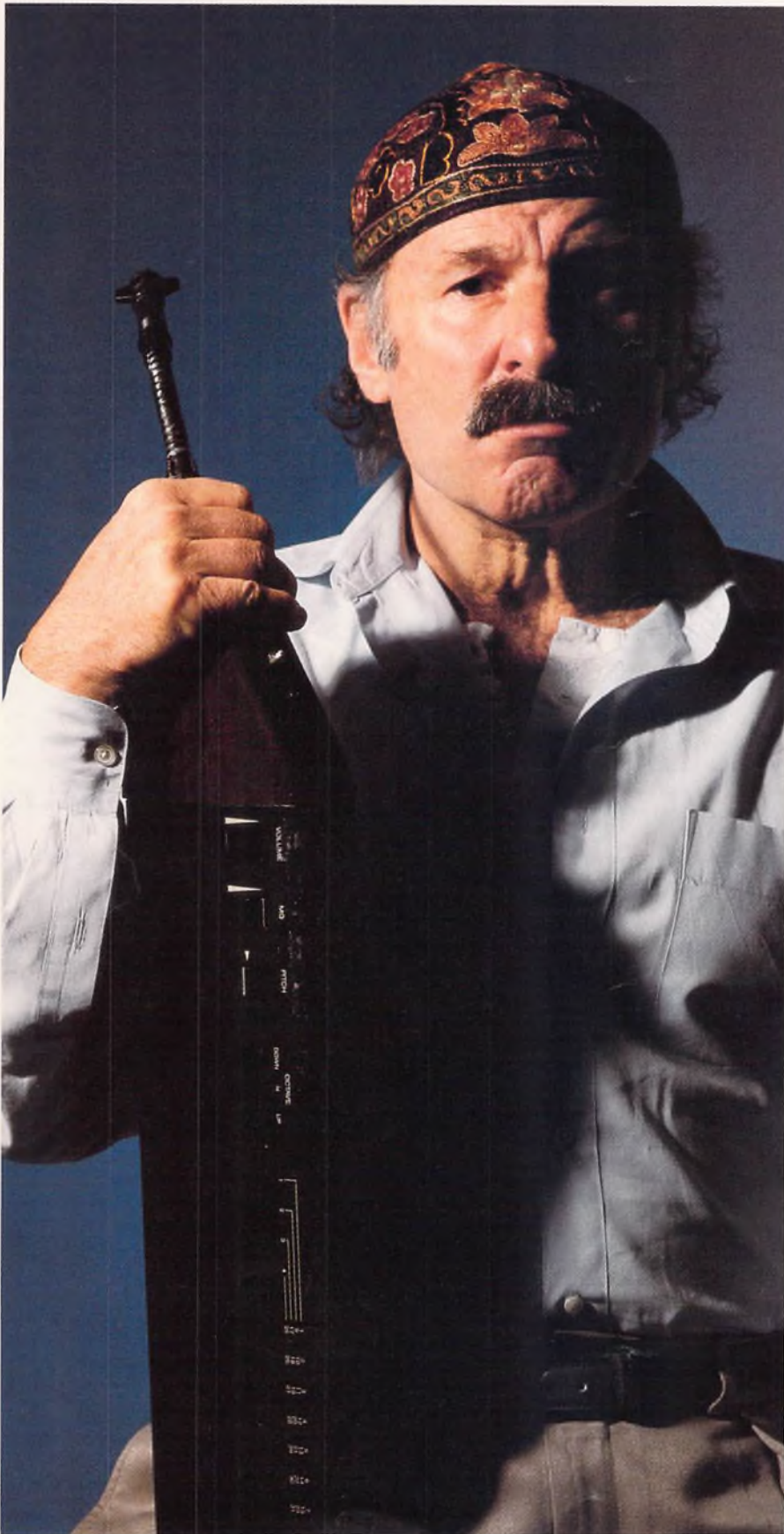
"I have a background in playing acoustic music," says 25-year-old bassist Charnett Moffett, "but before I even learned how to play an instrument, I enjoyed music in general. I didn't grow up listening to Charlie Parker, I grew up listening to Weather Report and Earth, Wind & Fire." One of drummer Charles Moffett's five musical offspring, Charnett played in Wynton Marsalis' quintet at 16 and has since recorded on some 50 albums, including *Network* (Manhattan 7 96109; see "Reviews" Jan. '92), his third as a leader, where he plays electric bass and piccolo bass guitar. "I like to play different styles, and I've been able to incorporate them and come up with my own concept," he says. "Music has to be categorized, but it's gotten to the point that it's a hindrance to creativity. They try to keep the music in a certain bag, and when you do that you're killing the music, because it can't breathe."

In a generation so timid that electric funk is considered controversial and '60s modalism daring, it's hard to imagine a genuine stylistic breakthrough anytime soon. If there's a young Sun Ra or Muhal Richard Abrams on the horizon, he or she has yet to be sighted, much less signed to a contract. Retrospection and consolidation are the order of the day, with brave talk of innovation still largely unrealized. Only time will tell, but if you believe the lions themselves, their ultimate goal is not merely to reinvent the wheel. "We're trying to explore every possible avenue of the music," says Roy Hargrove. "From the swing era on up into free jazz. Basically, we're celebrating the knowledge of our history. It's important to be open-minded and keep a view of the whole spectrum of the music, so that we can move forward into something revolutionary."



Marlon Jordan: "I would like to see young players stretch out and not be so traditional."

A recent Harvard social sciences graduate with no formal music training and little working experience, tenor saxist Joshua Redman, 23, won this year's Thelonious Monk International Jazz Saxophone Competition in Washington, D.C. The son of saxman Dewey Redman, Joshua is the object of a record-company bidding war. "I'm not a neo-traditionalist or neo-conservative," he says, "and I don't think there's any value to those labels. But writers see young musicians up there in suits and ties, and they let those labels cover up their ears. If they stopped trying to label everything, they'd be surprised at the variety that's coming out. I haven't run into many young musicians who are bent on recapturing the lost glory of the bebop era. I'm not worried about the future of jazz in that sense. As long as people are serious about expressing themselves freely and creatively, I think the future of jazz is secure." **DB**



Groove Gangster

JOE ZAWINUL

By Fred Shuster

It's a bright, sunny Sunday afternoon in Los Angeles and Joe Zawinul is motioning towards the Pacific Ocean far below the patio of his hillside Malibu home. He's describing the image that prompted him to compose a track called "Patriots" from the upcoming Zawinul Syndicate album, *Lost Tribes*. It's an image far removed from the blue sea and white sand twinkling along the shore. As a trawler made its way across the horizon, Zawinul took a sip of water and spoke in Austrian-accented English.

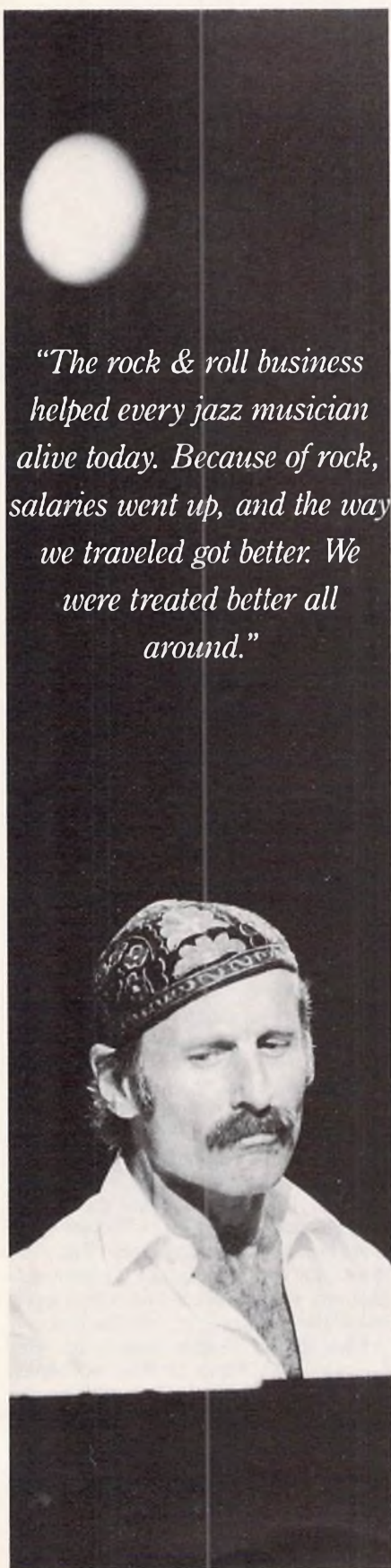
"It was on TV during the Persian Gulf War. Out there in the desert, this young kid—one of our soldiers—was playing his saxophone all alone, surrounded by nothing but sand; a million miles from home," Zawinul explained. "I started thinking about all the black kids that volunteered to fight in that war. Not having a draft in America, I see that as a very positive sign."

The resulting tune is an uptempo African-inspired workout with a polyrhythmic twist: beneath the funky electronics-driven groove, a slow blues progression snakes its way through the number, as if to underline the timelessness of earthy traditions. It's the sort of unusual arranging touch Zawinul-watchers have come to expect from the 59-year-old keyboardist/composer/bandleader. After all, this is the man who—with Herbie Hancock and Chick Corea—led the electronic keyboard revolution in jazz. But of the three, all of whom started out as mainstream pianists, only Zawinul has consistently stayed the course of electronic keyboards.

Even though Weather Report, the band he co-led with Wayne Shorter, is defunct, many of the group's albums, including *Tale Spinnin'*, *Black Market*, and *Heavy Weather*, still sound fresh. The Zawinul Syndicate carries on that tradition.

"I almost called the whole album *Patriots* because it's a concept I've been thinking about a lot lately," he said. "What is it to love your country? I mean, we should all be

BILL DOUGHTART



"The rock & roll business helped every jazz musician alive today. Because of rock, salaries went up, and the way we traveled got better. We were treated better all around."

on the side of our country, but if the country is sick, then we must help cure it. What you put in, you eventually get out."

Tradition and belief in one's roots are themes that have turned up time and again in Zawinul's work. As a youth in Vienna, Zawinul's first instrument was the accordion, which he played during village get-togethers with his large family.

"I come from folk music. I learned how to play for a lot of people all the time. On the weekends, when we'd all get together and sing and play, I kept the beat. I learned to become a very strong beat keeper and that helped my general music sense in the long run."

Austrian village life is a long way from where Zawinul finds himself today. In the garage of his Malibu home, the keyboardist has a totally self-contained recording studio, capable of recording and mixing entire albums, and where, in fact, *Lost Tribes* was recorded.

Long interested in the rhythms of the world, Zawinul took on his first outside production job when the acclaimed African singer Salif Keita contacted him last year to produce, arrange, and play on a new album. *Amen* spent 13 weeks at the top of *Billboard's* world music chart and was nominated for a Grammy for best world music album (see "Reviews" Feb. '92).

Zawinul acknowledged arguments with certain of Keita's musicians and handlers regarding the use of electronics and Western-sounding chord progressions. But Zawinul, who didn't want to make an album of modal grooves, stuck to his guns in his new role as producer.

"At first they thought there was too much harmony, that it was too modern," Zawinul said. "But I was steadfast. I would never take anything away from his art. But, on the other hand, the reason he hired me was he wanted some of my work in there. Otherwise, he would have made the record in Africa." For his part, Keita is highly pleased with the result. Working with Zawinul, he said from New York, it "was like working in heaven."

Amen is destined to be a world music classic, perhaps the first disc of its type to realize the potential of African sophistication and Western knowhow. It has been called the *Aja* of world beat, a reference to the shimmering Steely Dan album of the same name. Guest musicians included Zawinul's former Weather Report partner, Wayne Shorter, and Carlos Santana. "It was one of my favorite experiences," Zawinul recalled. "Salif is a phenomenal artist. What I like about the album is I really don't think I took anything away from their culture. The world is full of music, and as much as I love jazz, I

can also appreciate Egyptian music or some music from Turkey just as much."

Keita and the Zawinul Syndicate are planning a world tour together later this year. Going out on the road is a prospect Zawinul looks forward to. Last year, his band toured four continents and on one leg played 48 one-nighters in a row. "We know how to tour," he said. "You learn how to live and relax at a fast pace when you do this a lot. We just go from one place to the next. It's our life. We've chosen it."

Usually, while on the road, the band travels by bus, but sleeps in hotels. Zawinul's son, Ivan, acts as the band's sound engineer. The group—which includes Mike Baker on drums, Robert "Bobby" Thomas Jr. on hand drums and flute, holdover Gerald Veasley on bass, and Randy Bernsen on acoustic and electric guitars replacing the highly-touted Scott Henderson—rarely misses a sound-check. "When we go on the bandstand every night, we are on and we sound right," Zawinul bragged. "People spend their hard-earned money to see us. It would be a sin to go out there and not do a good concert or not give our best.

"For me, music is music, but entertainment is the thing. Louis Armstrong, Duke, Basic, the master players, they brought something more than just great music to the audience. There was an entertainment factor that's missing from so much mainstream music today. You can play great music and still be a good entertainer. You don't have to act dead on stage."

Zawinul doesn't cloister himself away from the current trends in popular music; he turned up on Quincy Jones' Grammy-winning *Back On The Block* album along with a host of rappers and current r&b singers. "The rock & roll business helped every jazz musician alive today," Zawinul said. "Because of rock, salaries went up, and the way we traveled got better. We were treated better all around."

But, ironically, one trend Zawinul helped create is causing him some upset—sampling. Portions of certain Weather Report tunes—like Alphonso Johnson's impossibly funky bass line in "Cucumber Slumber" from *Mysterious Traveller*—have been "borrowed" by rappers. And nobody asked Zawinul first. "If you steal something, steal it, and play it yourself," he raged. "In the case of sampling, some type of money should be paid depending on what is being used."

Zawinul migrated to America in 1959, soon after winning a scholarship to the Berklee School of Music in Boston. "Without Berklee, I would never have come to America," he says. But he didn't spend long at the school; Maynard Ferguson hired him almost immediately.



Zawinul plays PePe, a breath-controlled MIDI instrument he designed.

That led to a two-year stint with Dinah Washington and then Cannonball Adderley. For Cannonball's band, Zawinul wrote a tune that became an r&b pop classic, "Mercy, Mercy, Mercy." "It still brings in a couple of bucks here and there," Zawinul (under)stated.

In the late '60s, Zawinul left Adderley's band and began playing with Miles Davis in loose studio sessions that married electronics, free-form improvisation, and intricate polyrhythms. One of Zawinul's tunes, the gorgeous "In A Silent Way," became the title track for one of Davis' key "fusion" recordings of the period.

"Miles was an entertainer," Zawinul said. "For me, he was the greatest artist playing the trumpet, maybe not the greatest trumpet player. There's a big difference. To me, an instrument doesn't mean anything. It's like a hammer, a tool. Whatever you create with it, this is you, it comes from you. You give an idiot a trumpet, it's going to be sad as hell. You give an idiot a synthesizer, it's going to be even sadder."

In 1970, Zawinul and Shorter founded Weather Report, one of the era's most popular fusion groups. By then, Zawinul had traded in his Fender Rhodes and Wurlitzer electric pianos for the new generation of synthesizers by Oberheim, ARP, and Prophet. And who could forget the ring modulator?

"I like synthesizers," Zawinul explained. "They give me so many opportunities. Synthesizers give you an array of sounds to work with. They let my imagination go without limits. Sampling isn't cheating. It's not a translation. You have the actual sound of the source instrument, and each sound requires a totally different approach. I still

use the Rhodes. I use anything and everything. I never throw any piece of equipment away."

Weather Report, with the late, great bassist Jaco Pastorius, had a left-field hit with "Birdland" in 1977. The catchy tune, named after the famous New York nightclub where Zawinul hung out from the time he arrived in America, was later covered by Manhattan Transfer and Ferguson's big band. Far from being an albatross around his neck, "Birdland" doesn't badger Zawinul one bit. While the royalties continue to come in, Zawinul hasn't played the song since 1984. And audiences that come to see the Syndicate don't request it, either, he said. "The tune was a challenge because you had to

play the chords with your left hand, while you soloed on top with your right."

Weather Report disbanded in 1985, but without hard feelings. "It was suffocating because Wayne and I were kind of hidden underneath the big name," Zawinul said. "It was time to go on. Wayne and I were friends and we always will be friends, but it was time to make a move. Weather Report would tour and record an album every year. A project like this one with Salif Keita, which took about three months, could never have happened."

Shorter said he and Zawinul share a musical vocabulary that comes into play when the two improvise together on stage. "We play off each other," Shorter related. "There are very few musicians who are able to improvise compositions on the spot and make it both entertaining and moving. Joe does that, plus he has the ability to focus on many aspects of musical storytelling. He calls on the range of human folk expression when he plays."

Today, Zawinul tours when he likes and has the luxury of spending time with Maxine, his wife of 30 years, and their three sons: Anthony, 30, Erich, 26, and Ivan, 23.

He also has time to write. "My tunes are all improvised. I sit down and play an entire song from start to finish. And I change nothing. I leave it the way it came through the first time. Later, I might think of a hipper chord, but I never go back and put it in. I believe in nature and what nature gives me."

What nature has given Zawinul is a restless spirit and a great appreciation for self-expression. "Everybody has something to say, but they have to find the right means. For me, I've got the Syndicate to express myself. And as long as the band is growing, we don't have to change." **DB**

EQUIPMENT

Joe Zawinul says he never throws anything out, and he's accumulated a storage locker and garage full of keyboards, effects boxes, and various electronic odds and ends to prove it. He also collects unusual instruments from around the world, including a didjeridu from Australia, calimbas from Mali, and the very first instrument he learned to play as a child in Austria, an accordion built in the 1940s.

For stage work, Zawinul's setup consists of more than 30 pieces of digital and analog equip-

ment, including a Prophet T8, a Korg 707, a Korg DW-8000, and a Korg M-1, all keyboards. He also uses a Korg turbo DSS-1 sampling keyboard, two Korg DSM-1 rack-mount samplers, a Chroma Expander module, an Oberheim Expander, and an expanded Korg Wavestation keyboard.

Zawinul, who has been sponsored by Korg for more than 10 years, plays the Korg PePe, a six-note breath controller with wireless MIDI that he devised. At his feet are 12 Korg volume pedals.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

with the Zawinul Syndicate

LOST TRIBES—Columbia (projected fall release)
BLACK WATER—Columbia 44316
THE IMMIGRANTS—Columbia 40969

with Salif Keita

AMEN—Mango 162 539 910

as a leader

DIALECTS—Columbia 40081
ZAWINUL—Atlantic 1679-2

with Miles Davis

BITCHES BREW—Columbia 40577
IN A SILENT WAY—Columbia 40580

with Weather Report

MR. GONE—Columbia CK-46869
HEAVY WEATHER—Columbia CK-47481
BLACK MARKET—Columbia CK-34099
TALE SPINNIN'—Columbia (out of print)
MYSTERIOUS TRAVELLER—Columbia 32494

(See **DB** April '88 for other releases.)

To Gil, With Love

MARIA SCHNEIDER

By Bart Marantz

With the grace and assurance of a symphony conductor, 1991 Gil Evans Fellowship award-winner Maria Schneider led her concert jazz big band through a spirited reading of her debut performance of *Evanescence*. Commissioned to compose a work to be premiered at this year's annual International Association of Jazz Educators convention, Schneider's presentation of *Evanescence* placed her front and center as she whooped and swirled her arms, red hair flowing as if to accent her dramatic emphases. A smallish woman, Schneider was clearly in command, evoking images of veteran big band leader Toshiko Akiyoshi.

The connection to the late arranger/composer/bandleader Gil Evans was obvious even before the piece was performed. As Schneider came on stage, she went directly to the mic and began to talk to her audience of jazz educators and musicians from around the world about *Evanescence*, her voice shaking with emotion. She told us of Gil's influence on her work, and, indeed, as the music filled the auditorium, I realized that here was much more than just a surface study of the Gil Evans sound.

Born in Windom, Minnesota in 1960, Schneider started piano lessons at the ripe old age of three. "My lessons were taught from a theory perspective, and there was always a fake book at each meeting," she recalls. "By the age of six I had to analyze every chord in my classical pieces from beginning to end. The piano was my main instrument, but writing became the emphasis."

As she listened to her parents' big band albums, she discovered inspiration for her composing and found in the music the impetus to further develop her imagination and store of musical ideas.

After high school it was on to college at



DENNIS J. O'BRIEN

the University of Minnesota where she graduated with a Theory and Composition degree in 1983. It was during that same year that Schneider entered the University of Miami, and after a full year transferred to Eastman, studying with the late Ray Wright, graduating in 1985 with a Jazz and Contemporary Media Writing degree. "It was there that I met [composer] George Russell. I remember him telling us that you can't write jingles and not expect them to show in your other writing."

In the summer of '85, and with that statement in mind, it was time to make the move to New York City. Only a few months later, composer Tom Pierson had recommended her to Gil Evans to help catch up on copy work. The relationship would continue for the next three years until Gil's death in 1988.

There were other influences during this period of Schneider's career. A grant came from the National Endowment for the Arts to study with trombonist/arranger Bob Brookmeyer, who was writing for the Mel Lewis band at the time. "This was a more technical approach to arranging and a most valuable addition to my quest to be a better writer. I was introduced to Mel and listened to the band often. Mel's drums affected me, his touch musically. The way he understated was a great influence on my writing. There were times I would write the way Mel would play it." Schneider studied with Brookmeyer

from 1986 to 1991.

But it was Gil who had the most powerful impact on her writing. "When I first heard Gil's music, I heard the passion of music," Schneider remembers. "I realized that this was the emotion I wanted to express in my own music. One very influential album of Gil Evans' for me was *The Priestess* recording that captured all of the above, and more. I started doing transcribing and copy work for Gil in the beginning. He was the warmest, most accepting person I had ever met. He told me, 'Take in everything, discount nothing.' It was a full year before I gave him a tape of my writing by his request. A short time later I was doing some ghostwriting for him when things were on overload."

His influence was certainly evident during the performance of *Evanescence*. The University of Miami Concert Jazz Band played the piece with the polish of the master. But also in evidence was Schneider's own originality and maturity as a composer. As she said at the close of our interview: "You need to be honest with your art and yourself. If you are, it will come, and the honesty will show in your work."

Anyone who heard the performance of *Evanescence* heard this statement come alive through her writing. Maria Schneider is for real, and thanks to IAJE and the Herb Alpert Jazz Endowment Fund, there were many who were able to experience and enjoy her outstanding talent. **DB**



Can we take it on the road?—Dove Grusin (center) surrounded by the GRP All-Stars.

Big Band Bash

GRP ALL-STARS

By Josef Woodard

How is success measured? There it was in black & white: this past January, the Grammy nominations had been released and Michael Bloom, tireless publicity director of GRP Records, clutched the *L.A. Times* and admired another impressive tally for his company. This year, the

label had scored 15 nominations, surpassing any other jazz label. To anyone who has noted the label's meteoric ascent in the past five years, the news came as no real surprise. Numbers speak, and have spoken, well for the company that keyboardist/composer/arranger David Grusin and engineer/producer Larry Rosen started building 10 years ago.

At that very moment, many of the parties responsible for putting the label so squarely in the heart of the jazz industry were huddled into an unceremonious rehearsal space at SIR (Studio Instrumental Rental) in Hollywood. Other rooms throbbed with the sound of young rockers, but in this room, the sounds of freshly rearranged jazz chestnuts like "Seven Steps To Heaven," "Footprints," "Donna Lee," and "Round Midnight" were being brought to life. The aptly-named GRP All-Stars were flown in from around the country for a five-day recording project.

In the hallway on a break, saxophonist Ernie Watts grinned and shook his head:

"This is quite a conglomeration."

His assessment was an understatement. On saxes, Watts was joined by Bob Mintzer, Tom Scott, Eric Marienthal, and Nelson Rangell. On trumpets were Randy Brecker, Sal Marquez, and Arturo Sandoval, with trombonist George Bohannon. Bassist John Patitucci, drummer Dave Weckl, and percussionist Alex Acuña played rhythmic hosts while the piano chair was kept warm by Kenny Kirkland, Russell Ferrante, Dave Grusin, and David Benoit. Guests included clarinetist Eddie Daniels, vibist Gary Burton, and guitarist Lee Ritenour. What do these musicians have in common? GRP is their mothership.

Someone casually asked Scott if he was keeping busy. "Oh yeah, real busy," he said, tongue firmly in cheek, "big band rehearsals every day." The professional jazz big band is almost a contradiction in terms, which is partly why this session was so inspiring and its players so emotionally involved.

The chief organizer was producer/ar-

ranger Michael Abene, who oversaw the realization of the project. "It's a madcap world," he said, in the midst of it all. "The idea of trying to get all these guys in one place for five days was not easy. We have to rehearse 12 charts in three days. Once we record, it's over. It's the 'Wham bam, thank you, Ma'am' school."

Meanwhile, the All-Stars were chasing down a hot, thorny arrangement of Chick Corea's "Spain." The band maneuvered the tough tutti line and the other tight corners of the chart, but there was confusion over the ending. Tom Scott, who provided much comic relief during the grueling rehearsal/recording stint, said "I think we've overanalyzed this thing to death." Larry Rosen, the R of GRP, said, only half-jokingly, "Get Chick on the phone."

Corea, officially on hiatus at the time of the recording, was one of the few GRP regulars who didn't make the session. As Peter Sprague, who orchestrated Corea's arrangement, explained about his work on the tune, "It was an odd position to be in. I called up Chick and asked him about the orchestration. I was surprised—there are some pretty *out* notes in there, not the ones I might have picked. But now I'm starting to really like it."

The next chart up was Dizzy Gillespie and Chano Pozo's "Manteca," arranged by Bob Mintzer, who has more of an active, personal stake in big band music than anyone in the room. Duties are tossed democratically throughout the ranks. Coming off a percussion break from Weckl and Acuña, Sandoval and Brecker nail a high part. There's a question of what accents to play under a high trumpet part. From behind his bari sax, Scott makes one suggestion, after which Marquez cracks, "No comments from the front line. You just sit there and blow into that big thing." Laughter all around.

From the back line, Acuña tosses out a solution, of phrasing a line differently by displacing a few notes by an eighth note. Arrangement-tweaking while you wait.

The big band project is more than an enlightened whim or an altruistic labor of love. In essence, GRP hired itself a blue-chip band to play at its 10th anniversary party. They didn't have to look very far to fill out the ranks. And it's a fair bet that the GRP All-Stars will be reaping rewards come Grammy time next year. Whether or not it's successful by numerical standards, the album (released May 12) makes an important contribution to the fragile world of big band music.

GRP, as everyone close to jazz and many others in the Western world by now know, is the best-known and most lucrative acronym in jazz. Detractors and critics let it be

known that the label's jazz credentials are not entirely in order, and suggest that they have ridden to glory on waves of hype and poppish palaver. But most GRP bashers aren't telling the whole story, the one about the label which made its mint with happy, groove-y jazz, but has diverted some of its earnings and attention into special projects (such as the big band album and other mainstream jazz releases due out this year) and choice reissues.

Nor are the bashers telling the fluke success story of the two musician/producer/entrepreneurs who decided to take matters into their own hands a decade back, and who were as surprised as anyone that the project sailed so smoothly into the commercial stratosphere.

For year number 10, the label is making a concerted effort to broaden its image by focusing on several releases for which jazz is the only proper name. Kicking these off late last year was Grusin's album, *The Gershwin Connection* (see "Reviews" Jan. '92). Before the year is out, the list will include Arturo Sandoval's *I Remember Clifford* (see p. 35), a tribute to Clifford Brown; Tom Scott's pop-free, straightahead session with Kenny Kirkland, John Patitucci, Randy Brecker, called *Born Again*; Diane Schuur's tribute to female jazz vocalists, *In Tribute* (see p. 49); Eddie Daniels and Gary Burton's

Armstrong box set—and continues to reissue the Impulse! catalog, with an emphasis on late-period John Coltrane recordings. Both the Decca and Impulse! vaults became available to them when MCA paid \$40 million for GRP in 1990.

If we didn't know better, it would seem that GRP has had a change of heart in terms of stylistic direction. But, talk to Rosen, and he'll insist that capital-J jazz was never far from the surface. For one thing, big band jazz—while not a feature of the GRP roster in the past few years—is an area dear to the heart of the label, and to Rosen. One of the label's first projects, in fact, was *In A Digital Mood* by the Glenn Miller Orchestra. In 1985, they released *Digital Duke* (add this one, by the way, to the Grammy tally). There was also a collaborative album with the Count Basie band and Diane Schuur.

Rosen commented, "When we started the company in 1982, we recorded Glenn Miller because CDs were just coming on the horizon and we thought this would be a perfect demonstration disc to show the sound quality of CDs. So we got the original Glenn Miller arrangements, and since we realized that was some of the most popular instrumental music on a worldwide basis, we recorded that. And it just keeps selling."

Rosen was the catalyst for making the new big band album a reality. A jazz drum-



Working on "Donna Lee": (from left) Michael Abene, Larry Rosen, Dave Grusin, Nelson Rangell, Eddie Daniels, and Gary Burton.

mer, Rosen played in the Newport Youth Band in the late '50s and early '60s with pianist Abene. Eddie Daniels was also in the band.

ode to the Benny Goodman/Lionel Hampton legacy, *Benny Rides Again* (see "Caught" Apr. '92); Sal Marquez's Miles Davis homage, *One For Dewey*; and, Gerry Mulligan's *Rebirth Of The Cool*, a special reconsideration of the Miles Davis classic from 1949-50.

In addition to these backwards-glancing jazz tributes, GRP is reissuing titles from the Decca label—including a four-CD Louis

"Big band music, as far as I'm concerned, is part of my roots," Rosen bragged. "The fact of my producing a big band album was a natural thing, just a matter of putting the pieces together."

Rare as jazz big band recordings are in



Randy Brecker and Arturo Sandoval hit the high notes.

GRP's business at hand—and, in fact, rare as they are with any label, due to the expense and the limited market—the musicians themselves are well-equipped for the task. Abene noted, "I think everyone but two or three guys here has had big band experience. Generally speaking, everyone has played in bands, either from a recording standpoint or playing on the road with them."

Rosen doesn't necessarily see great sales potential with a specialty album such as this. But he believes its uniqueness could at least allow for the possibility of a surprise response.

"It's not just a pickup band or a bunch of studio players," said Rosen. "These guys are all top soloists and leaders on their own. To be able to put them together in one band and do this classic music brings together elements that could make it commercially successful as well. That's the *X* factor. All I know is that every agent and promoter who has heard about this has called me about booking this band."

While working mostly behind the scenes as a producer/writer/arranger, Abene is no stranger to GRP, having worked on the *Digital Duke* album, the *Happy Anniversary*, *Charlie Brown!* compilation, and other single-artist albums. "I'm a freelance producer," he explains "I just happen to be doing a lot with GRP. We have a joke: I get involved in these big logistically difficult records. For the Christmas album and the Charlie Brown record, we had guys coming in from all over. So I'm their logistics expert."

Abene tackled two of the dozen charts. "I wanted to do 'Airegin' because I had done a chart on it for Maynard Ferguson's band in '62 or '63. I heard a chart of 'Sister Sadie' by Gil Evans a long time ago, and wanted to take a shot at it."

After rehearsals, the base of operations shifted over to Ocean Way, the renowned recording studio which has heard the likes of Frank Sinatra, the Beach Boys, Elvis Costello, and on and on. Here, the band played in one large studio, with their every move captured on video for a future documentary. The video signal was also fed to another studio, where a sizable live audience watched the session live on large-screen TV.

Sitting on a couch in the lounge, Vince Mendoza was anxiously awaiting his chart. Mendoza, the composer/arranger who has become one of the most promising young jazz figures *sans* instrument, was behind the chart on "Round Midnight," which has been overplayed to the point where a fresh approach is more than welcome. Mendoza had the band sneak up on Thelonious Monk's familiar head, played by tenor saxist Watts, and twirled chord changes around throughout, in one of the more imaginative displays of arrangement revision on the project.

David Benoit, the most pop-inclined artist in the room, had arranged Lee Morgan's "Sidewinder." It's an apt choice in that the r&b vamp, of the sort heard on many a mid-'60s Blue Note album, could be considered the GRP groove of its day. Scott's honking bari added some levity to the situation as he starts by issuing behind-the-beat, mock-Egyptian snake-charmer riffs before slipping into the groove.

The bop dervish dance of "Donna Lee," here served up in a snappy arrangement by Scott, was a showpiece of the set. But the choice of soloists—Rangell on piccolo, Daniels' clarinet, and Burton's vibes—slyly avoided the expected bop instrumental colors of sax, trumpet, or piano.

After the band ran down the tune, Scott turned to Grusin and asked, "Is the audience

enjoying it?" (The setup here separated the performers and audience into separate rooms, with no direct contact.) Grusin grinned, reporting that "The biorhythms in there are incredible, man. It's like . . ." he made a wave-like motion with his hand.

Grusin's contribution to the project was an arrangement of Herbie Hancock's "Maiden Voyage." "I've loved the tune," he explained, "ever since I heard Herbie do it. I did another arrangement of it with a lyric for Jon Lucien. The lyrics were written by Jeannie Hancock, Herbie's sister. She was subsequently killed in a plane crash in Dallas. She was a wonderful girl and a talented writer."

Live, he peeled off a solo that was reliably crisp and neat. Eddie Daniels' clarinet solo segued, by a neat fool-the-ear maneuver in the arrangement, into Mintzer's bass clarinet part. But, perhaps exercising the boss' prerogative, Grusin called for a second take, to take better aim at timing and tuning.

For the most part, the band laid down first-takes for the record. But it was not a completely unforgiving recording environment. On "Blue Train," a couple of audible clams early in the tune led to a slicker second pass. On it, Bohannon played a sly and slippery solo, hanging on flatted fifths and a left-of-center attitude elsewhere missing in the session.

Closing the session was "I Remember Clifford," featuring a luscious solo by Sandoval, full of steely confidence and sure pitch. It ended, literally, on a high note.

The players, thankful for a chance to participate in an art that has died as a commercial form, packed up and took flight to their various corners of the world and their various musical realities, already in motion. Another GRP project, albeit a unique one, was in the can. It was a fine day for big band jazz. **DB**

Key

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



Arturo Sandoval

I REMEMBER CLIFFORD—GRP GRD 9668: *DAAHOUJ; JOY SPRING; PAHISIAN THOROUGHFARE; CHEROKEE; I REMEMBER CLIFFORD; THE BLUES WALK; SANDU; I GET A KICK OUT OF YOU; JORDU; CARAVAN; I LEFT THIS SPACE FOR YOU.* (62:08)

Personnel: Sandoval, trumpet, flugelhorn; Ernie Watts (cuts 1, 4, 7, 9, 10), Ed Calle (2), David Sanchez (3, 6, 8), tenor saxophone; Kenny Kirkland, piano; Felix Gomez, keyboards (5); Char-nett Moffett, bass; Kenny Washington, drums.

★★★★★ ½

TUMBAITO—Messidor 15974-2: *A NIGHT IN TUNISIA; TUNISIA'S BLUES; NUESTRO BLUES; LOS ELEFANTES; RELAX; TUMBAITO.* (41:23)

Personnel: Sandoval, trumpet, flugelhorn, piano, percussion; Jorge Chicoy, guitar; Hilario Duran, piano; Jorge Reyes, bass; Bernardo Garcia, drums; Reinaldo Valera, percussion.

★★★ ½

I Remember Clifford serves the memory of the late trumpeter well. The occasional trumpet-choir effect wherein excerpts of Brown's recorded choruses are harmonized by Sandoval via multitracking is a bit showy. But Sandoval's involvement in the long-lined, running bebop style of Brown is a true, unselfish tribute. "I Get A Kick Out Of You" and "Caravan" contain his most dazzling solos. When he turns pretty, as on the title tune and his own "I Left This Space For You," he's equally convincing. There's a minor lapse on "Blues Walk," where he suggests Al Hirt or Maynard Ferguson (which becomes a sizable problem on *Tumbaito*). But overall, he stays on course.

The saxophonists do not try to emulate Sonny Rollins or Harold Land, who alternately were Brown's front-line partners in the Brown-Max Roach Quintet of the mid-'50s; although a case could be made for Kirkland's kinship to Richie Powell, the Quintet's pianist. (Powell, brother of Bud, was killed in the car crash with

Brown in 1956.) Closest of all is Washington, who, we're told in the liner notes, uses the Roach tunings from those days. As for the harmonized trumpet introductions, interludes, and endings, we're told that they allow Sandoval and Brown to collaborate, so to speak. They do underscore the closeness of the two trumpeters, which is what this album is all about. (reviewed on cassette)

Tumbaito, recorded in 1986 in Madrid with Sandoval's working band at the time, suffers from the "Flight Of The Bumblebee" syndrome. A showcase for the trumpeter's versatility and high-note facility, it seems too much technique for technique's sake. Nevertheless, his "Nuestro's Blues" is a tour de force. His Dizzy-ing work on Gillespie's "A Night In Tunisia" and his own sequel titled "Tunisia's Blues" are effective, but the rest of the album holds little jazz interest. Here we get more of Sandoval's pop, rock, and classical bent. Throughout the album, the rhythm section matches the leader's fiery brand of showmanship blow for blow. (reviewed on CD) —Owen Cordle



Wayne Horvitz/ The President

MIRACLE MILE—Elektra Nonesuch: *THE FRONT; VARIATIONS ON A THEME BY W.C. HANDY; I'M DOWNSTAIRS; SHUFFLE; AND SING THIS SONG; YUBA CITY; AN OPEN LETTER TO GEORGE BUSH; MIRACLE MILE.* (47:43)

Personnel: Horvitz, keyboards, amplified piano, harmonica; Stew Cutler, guitar; J. A. Deane, trombone, electronics; Kermit Driscoll, electric bass; Bobby Previte, drums; Doug Wieselmann, tenor sax, clarinet; Bill Frisell, guitar; Denny Goodhew, saxophones; Elliott Sharp, guitar; Ben Steele, guitar-controlled sampler.

★★★★★

Robin Holcomb

ROCKABYE—Elektra Nonesuch: *HELP A MAN; PLEASE PROVIDE; ROCKABYE; IOWA LANDS; WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME; DIXIE; PRIMAVERA; THE GOOD-NIGHT-LOVIN' TRAIL; WIDOWMAKER; THE NATURAL WORLD.*

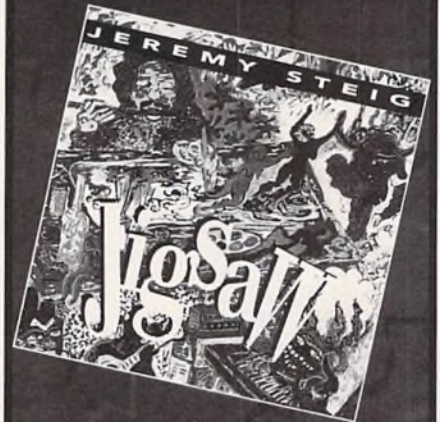
Personnel: Holcomb, piano, vocals; with Stew Cutler (cuts 1-3, 7, 8, 10), Doug Wieselmann (3, 7, 8, 10), Peter Holsapple (1, 5), Bill Frisell (5), guitars; Marty Ehrlich (6, 10), tenor sax; Doug Wieselmann (2, 4, 6, 10), tenor sax, clarinet; Art Baron (6, 10), trombone; Wayne Horvitz (1-3, 5, 7, 10), Hammond organ, keyboards; Dave Hofstra, bass, tuba; Alan Bezozzi (1, 5), Danny Frankel (2-4, 6-8, 10), drums, percussion; the Steele Family Singers (1, 2, 10), background vocals.

★★★★★

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dent's second album in four years, is dense with such friendly melodies, finger-poppin' jams, and swingy bops. But the real allure here is the seamlessness of the ensemble's telepathic improvisations and the simple beauty of great sounds that, whether electronic or acoustic, are irresistibly organic.

Essentially a groove band born out of New York City's "downtown jazz scene," Horvitz's rhythmically driven compositions use his keyboards as the foundation, beginning with a looping, minimalist ostinato or a smoky Booker T. and the MGs-like bass figure. From there, other instruments introduce the melody, then weave in and out, improvising. Subtleties make the difference: a rhythmic pattern's sudden shift, a spurt of rock guitar, a muted background sound, the pronounced swish and slap of brushes on a snare. There are no stray sounds here, no wasted motions, only the heartfelt interaction of a group of accomplished musicians melded into a true ensemble.

Holcomb, a composer and pianist from the same New York jazz crowd (though she now lives in Seattle), used some of the same fine musicians (Cutler, Wieselmann, Frisell) on *Rockabye*, and it was produced by Horvitz; but hers is a completely different kind of record. First off, Holcomb's focus is her lyrics, which fill up song-stories that provide glimpses into another time, another place, a tale of love or pain. Holcomb's vocals are delicate and pretty, trembling with a vibrato that echoes of Appalachian balladeers or litting with the cheerful twang of

Arturo Sandoval in a Trumpet Tribute!

Joined by Kenny Kirkland on piano and saxophonist Ernie Watts, the Cuban expatriate and trumpet virtuoso Arturo Sandoval pays tribute to the legendary trumpeter, Clifford Brown. "I Remember Clifford" will be remembered for years to come...



Available on GRP Compact Disc and HQ Cassette.

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country-swing. Her words share her visions, her voice reveals her feelings, and together these elements make her characters real.

Behind those vocals, the music is folksy, genuine, and expertly composed. On most songs, the accompaniment is pure Americana, with woodwinds, brass, or acoustic guitar adorning straightforward piano. But "When Was The Last Time," with its shimmering guitars, Hammond organ, and strong backbeat, is a rockin' pop gem, albeit one with a spiritual message. But then, sanctification seems to be Holcomb's concern. It's there in the Steele Family Singers' backup vocals on "Please Provide" and "Natural World," and in her overall message, which adds simplicity and truth to equal redemption. —Suzanne McElfresh



Jimmie Lunceford

STOMP IT OFF—Decca GRD 608: *SOPHISTICATED LADY; MOOD INDIGO; ROSE ROOM; BLACK AND TAN FANTASY; STRATOSPHERE; MISS OTIS REGRETS; STAR DUST; DREAM OF YOU; STOMP IT OFF; SOLITUDE; RAIN; SINCE MY BEST GAL TURNED ME DOWN; JEALOUS; RHYTHM IS OUR BUSINESS (2 TAKES); SHAKE YOUR HEAD; SLEEPY-TIME GAL; BIRD OF PARADISE; RHAPSODY JUNIOR; RUNNIN' WILD; FOUR OR FIVE TIMES.* (64:19)

Personnel: Eddie Tompkins, Sy Oliver, Tom Stevenson, Paul Webster, trumpets; Henry Wells, Russell Bowles, Elmer Crumbley, Eddie Durham, trombones; Willie Smith, Laforet Dent, Joe Thomas, Earl Carruthers, Dan Grissom, Lunceford, reeds; Ed Wilcox, piano; Al Norris, Eddie Durham, guitar; Moses Allen, bass; Jimmy Cleveland, drums.

★ ★ ★

American Jazz Orchestra

THE MUSIC OF JIMMIE LUNCEFORD—MusicMasters 65072-2: *LUNCEFORD SPECIAL; WHAT'S YOUR STORY, MORNING GLORY; BELGIUM STOMP; I'M ALONE WITH YOU; YARD DOG MAZURKA; HI SPOOK; FOR DANCERS ONLY; UPTOWN BLUES; ANNIE LAURIE; MARGIE; I WANNA HEAR SWING SONGS; ORGAN GRINDER'S SWING.* (47:02)

Personnel: John Eckert, Virgil Jones, Bob Millikan, Marvin Stamm, Byron Stripling, trumpets; Eddie Bert, Jimmy Knepper, Benny Powell, Dennis Wilson, trombones; Danny Bank, Jerry Dodgion, Bill Easley, John Purcell, Loren Schoenberg, Jerome Richardson, reeds; Howard Collins, guitar; Dick Katz, John Lewis, piano; John Goldsby, bass; Dennis Mackrel, drums; Doc Cheatham, vocal (cut 10).

★ ★ ★ ★

is much to admire in the Decca set, which collects Lunceford's early 1934-35 recordings in chronological order, skipping a half-dozen mediocrities and some alternates. Reed players Willie Smith and Joe Thomas deliver smart solo work. And the ensembles are precise, sometimes to the point of pickiness; not just in their attacks but in the shadings and dynamics that only a leader's vision can bring to a score. You'll find all this summarized in a remarkable reed passage on "Sleepy-Time Gal." But in its labyrinth of 16th notes also lies the core of lavish stylization that makes it hard for this band's sound to travel easily from the

'30s into '90s. Craft and precision, while certainly not inimical to jazz, are not its essence. Add to this the dated vocals, the frequent staccato strut of the ensembles, and the fact that this music is descended from a tradition of dance and show bands quite apart from the Fletcher Henderson-Bennie Moten lineage that produced the essence of swing, and you have fair warning that time has not served Lunceford as it has Ellington, Basie, or Goodman.

The AJO current reading picks up with "Organ Grinder's Swing" (1936), 15 months after the Decca set stops. More than half the

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If craftsmanship is its own reward, then there

set wisely concentrates on the band's later Columbia and Decca sides, some of which still sound very good. The swing era absorbed Lunceford to an extent. When he put his band into the hands of an arranger like Eddie Durham ("Blues In The Grooves," "Swingin' On C," neither of which unfortunately are heard here), it could sound uncharacteristically Basieish. The effect, it seems to me, was to squeeze out some of the band's period bric-a-brac without sapping its craftsmanship or originality. Listen

to the bop interjections that punctuate "Belgian Stomp" years before their time; and Kenton fans may be surprised to hear their man's "Intermission Riff" in "Yard Dog Mazurka." Soloists are true to the spirit if not the letter of the original material, which is as it should be. Yet, John Lewis stubbornly favors slightly sluggish tempos. They make for a looser swing, but at the expense of the snap that animated, say, the original "Lunceford Special." (reviewed on CD)
 —John McDonough

Whose Tradition?

by Art Lange

Big band music has probably the richest tradition in all of jazz—and also the most varied. How contemporary ensembles feed off that tradition, or find creative ways to break with it, defines their nature.

I doubt that **Jaki Byard and the Apollo Stompers** have ventured out of the New York area, which makes them an updated version of a territory band. Like those homegrown groups, the personnel is a mix of seasoned pros and youngbloods learning the ropes, and on *Phantasies II* (Soul Note 121175-2; 42:19; ★★★) the results show it. The soloists are uneven, and some of the tunes would have benefitted from another take or two. As a leader, Byard looks to royalty (Duke, Count, and Earl) for guidance, so tunes like "Up Jumps One" and "Concerto Grosso" are "in the style of . . ." It's a sound that won't alienate Swing fans, but won't excite more adventurous listeners—at least until Byard starts soloing.

Another, more distant territory band, the **Stockholm Jazz Orchestra** invited pianist **Jim McNeely** to supply them with charts, and *Jigsaw* (Dragon 213; 75:23; ★★★½) displays a surprising side to his talents. Some of these well-written scores—lots of tutti sections, lots of melodic twists—were composed for Mel Lewis' Orchestra, and a couple of the ballads with McNeely's old boss, Stan Getz, in mind. Ambitious pieces like "Blue Note" and "Off The Cuff" seem suited for concert stage bands, and I hear some playful Leonard Bernstein influence in the latter. The Swedish soloists are fluent in this idiom, especially altoist Johan Hörlen.

Swiss jazzmeister **George Gruntz** makes no bones about calling his annual multi-national outfit a **Concert Jazz Band**, and like the previous two bands it's obvious they play together for the love of it. *Blues 'N Dues Et Cetera* (enja 6072-2; 67:21; ★★★★★½) gets high marks for high-spirited compositions, high level of musicianship, and sheer enthusiasm. Gruntz's playfulness erupts in the compositions—who else would let Ray Anderson "Rap For Nap" (Napoleon, that is); combine John Scofield, Chris Hunter's Sanbornish alto, and a scratchin' dj on a tune called "Q-Base" (a friendly nudge at the M-Basers?); or weave warm atonal variations around "In A Sentimental Mood"? Soloists like Jon Faddis, Wallace Roney, and Gruntz himself don't hurt either.

Orange Then Blue, out of the Boston area, combines a re-view of repertory (Bird, Bill & Gil Evans tunes) with fashionable exotism (echoes of Brazil, Bulgaria, and Central America) on *Funkallero* (GM 3023CD; 71:05; ★★★★★). With arrangements spread out between Matt Darriau, George Schuller, and Adam Kolker, they employ a variety of colors and textures to launch the soloists. De-Johnette's "Ahmad The Terrible" and Bird's "Moose The Mooche" are typical, shifting gears through curves and straightaways. It's somewhat of a formula, but done this well, who's complaining?

When it comes to surprising repertory, it's hard to match **Willem Breuker's Kollek-**

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George Gruntz: for the love of it

tief. Lately they've added the Mondriaan Strings to become more of a chamber ensemble, and recreate neglected works with links to Breuker's quirky composing style. On *Parade* (BVHaast 9101; 60:22: ★★★★★) it's Erik Satie's droll wit and deadpan dadaisms (ragtime, circus and vaudeville tunes, repetition, and noise), while Breuker and pianist Henk DeJonge offer suites ranging from Chinese and Hungarian melodies to c&w saloon songs. There's more jazz to be heard on Breuker's *Heibel* (BVHaast 9102; 68:07: ★★★★★). His "mini-opera" "The Critic" adds classical violinist Lorre Lynn Trytten and vocalist Greetje Bijma (the Yma Sumac of jazz) and includes moments of Vivaldi, Nelson Eddy and Jeanette MacDonald, and characteristic Dutch hijinks. The fanfares, chase scenes, bolero parody, and extended solos are more engaging on the title suite, however—especially "Duke Edward/Misere," a breathtaking Ellingtonian New Orleans dirge—with Boy Raaymakers playing Cootie—that's worth the price of admission.

Where Breuker writes extended pieces, fellow Dutchman **Misha Mengelberg** is a master of the miniature misadventure. Two volumes of *Bospaadje Konijnhol (Forest Path Rabbit hole)* (ICP 028/29; 67:46/68:54: ★★★★★/★★★★) highlight his originality. Jazz fans may appreciate volume 1 more, thanks to the deconstruction of six Ellington songs—Duke through the looking glass. But whether he's disrupting jazz standards or a Viennese waltz, Mengelberg's satire is in conflict with the strong solos (thanks to George Lewis, Michael Moore, Ab Baars, Ernst Reijseger, et al.) and simplicity of the material. Pieces like "Cupboards And Books," "Bald Spots," and "K-wallpaper" are like Duchampian readymades, waiting to be elevated to art, or ridiculed, as the case may be. Not for the squeamish.

It's to Breuker and Mengelberg's credit that they've incorporated elements of their own country's theater and music into their work. *Sud* (Splasc(h) 501-2; 41:21: ★★★★★), a reissue of 1973 and '78 sessions by large ensembles led by **Mario Schiano**, was considered an important step in introducing local sounds and colors into Italian jazz. Sardinian bassist Marcello Melis contributed two pieces with folk-inspired melodies, while Tommaso Vittorini's big band chart on the title tune resembles

Eric Dolphy's writing for *Africa Brass* more than traditional section work. Schiano's a top-flight altoist, too, and the playful Mediterranean flavors are just as tasty to foreigners.

Muhai Richard Abrams sees tradition as a continuum, so it's no shock to hear him as an extension of Ellington via Sun Ra. *Blu Blu Blu* (Black Saint 120117-2; 77:09: ★★★★★) confirms his mastery of big band arranging. Though still identified with his experimental AACM adventures, Muhai has developed, à la Ellington, the ability to compose accessible music without compromise from

his roots in the blues. Thus, "Bloodline" (dedicated to Fletcher Henderson, Don Redman, and Benny Carter, its "Dicky's Dream"-like descending line recast from an appearance on an earlier Black Saint disc, *Rejoicing With The Light*) captures the essence of tradition without re-creating it. This, and the title tune, one of Muhai's classic Chicago blues in the style of "Down At Pepper's" and "Blues Forever," contrast with the unhackneyed melodic contours and exquisitely detailed scoring of pieces like "Septone" to remind us just how uncategorizable Muhai's art is. Committed

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playing from the orchestra (including Muhäl's own romping piano, Jack Walrath on trumpet, and whistler Joel Brandon, whom I swore was a synthesizer) adds to the urgent beauty of this music.

Two discs from **Anthony Braxton** reveal a totally different response to tradition and individuality. *Eugene* (1989) (Black Saint 120137-2; 79:33: ★★★★★) finds the conventional big band instrumentation broken and recombined in unusual configurations, as colors constantly change, moods emerge and withdraw. Guided by Braxton's dramatic organization, the eight pieces follow the musicians' involvement to self-determined design; much of the individual rhythmic impetus is jazz-oriented, but the melodic bent is frequently atonal—a cross-breeding of components with spiraling unisons, savvy solos, and a fresh view of big band possibilities. A completely different sound world is to be heard on *2 Compositions (Ensemble)* 1989/91 (hat ART 6086; 73:00: ★★★★★), as the extended compositions are performed by Hamburg and Frankfurt ensembles well-versed in contemporary New Music. This is the realm of Schoenberg's chamber symphonies, more Boulez than bop—a constant stream of events that create their own evolving soundscape of magical details. This side of Braxton's compositional nature is dynamic, complex, and fascinating, with its own rewards for the committed listener. (all reviewed on CD) **DB**



Donald Harrison

INDIAN BLUES—Candid CCD79514: *HU-TA-NAY; INDIAN BLUES; SHALLOW WATER; JA-KI-MO-FI-NA-HAY; INDIAN RED; TWO-WAY-POCKY-WAY; CHEROKEE; HIKO HIKO; UPTOWN RULER; BIG CHIEF; WALKIN' HOME; SHAVE 'EM DRY.* (55:03)

Personnel: Harrison Jr., alto and tenor saxes, tambourine, background vocals; Donald Harrison, Sr., lead vocals (cuts 1,3,6); Dr. John, piano (10-12), lead vocals (1,4,10,12); Cyrus Chestnut, piano, background vocals; Phil Bowler, bass, background vocals; Carl Allen, drums, background vocals; Howard "Smiley" Ricks, congas, tambourine, bottle, background vocals; Bruce Cox, tambourine, background vocals.

★ ★ ★ ★

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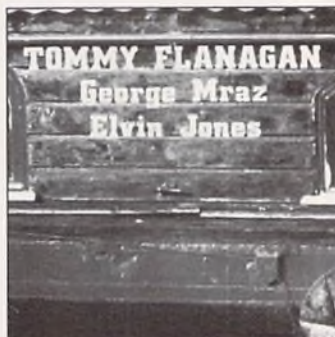
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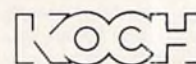
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on the scene with last year's *For Art's Sake* (Candid), an homage to his Messengers mentor. On *Indian Blues* he trades in his suit and tie for an elaborately feathered and sequined costume while paying tribute to his Mardi Gras Indian roots. It's a blend of second-line parade rhythms, catchy Caribbean beats, funky N'awlins r&b, and modern jazz that works remarkably well, particularly on the festive opener, "Hu-Ta-Nay," a tune that gives a listener the impression of being caught halfway between the Jazz Tent and the Lagniappe Tent at the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival.

Masking, chanting, and banging a tambourine alongside Donald on "Shallow Water" and "Two-Way-Pocky-Way" is his father, Donald Harrison, Sr., leader of the Guardians of the Flame, one of the black Indian tribes still thriving in New Orleans.

Cultures merge nicely on this exhilarating disc. "Cherokee" is underscored by a faint calypso rhythm and the chattering of tambourines. A lively second-line groove on "Hiko Hiko" suddenly segues to an easy-swinging 4/4 walking-bass feel. On "Ja-Ki-Mo-Fi-Na-Hay," Harrison blows robust, Rollinsesque tenor lines on top of Dr. John's raspy "Night Tripper" vocals, while the Mardi Gras Indian standard "Indian Red" becomes a moody extrapolation in modal playing. Dr. John turns in some spirited Longhairish piano on "Big Chief" and in a duet with Donald on "Walkin' Home." And Harrison, so intent on bridging gaps throughout this inspired project, gets to stretch out with his alto on "Uptown Ruler." It's an entirely organic kind of fusion music, done with honesty and integrity. (reviewed on CD)

—Bill Milkowski



Dr. Michael White

NEW YEAR'S AT THE VILLAGE VANGUARD—Antilles 512 168: *TELL ME YOUR DREAMS*; *CANAL STREET BLUES*; *WILD MAN BLUES*; *BY AND BY*; *WEIRD BLUES*; *ST. PHILLIP STREET BREAKDOWN*; *KISS ME SWEET*; *TAILGATE RAMBLE*; *PETITE FLEUH*; *LORD, LORD, LORD*. (62:39)

Personnel: White, clarinet; Wendell Brunious, Wynton Marsalis (cuts 2,4,10), trumpets; Freddie Lonzo, trombone; Don Vappie, banjo; Steve Pistorius, piano; Richard Paine, bass; Louis Cattrell, Jr., drums.

★★

Dr. Michael White exemplifies the dilemma of the preservationist in jazz, as the urge for authenticity so adamantly expressed in his traditional New Orleans jazz inherently inhibits jazz's built-in mandate for provocative change. In this regard, White, an exceptional clarinetist

who knows the idiom inside out, is in the same boat as the retroboppers. But, even more than the bop brats, White and his fluent Original Liberty Jazz Band focus on correct usage; arguably, for this style of jazz, with so few of its primary exponents still active, such an emphasis is justified. Still, apart from his deft synthesis of Jimmy Noone, Sidney Bechet, and Johnny Dodds, too little of *New Year's At The Village Vanguard* has the golden era's sweet sting

Guest artist Wynton Marsalis' solo on "Lord,

Lord, Lord" points up the limitations imposed by the orthodoxy. Marsalis attempts to push the accepted parameters of phraseology and syncopation by tossing in long notes and chromatic asides that grate against the two-beat groove. Yet, Marsalis' cohorts don't take the challenge; instead, the O.L.J.B. chugs along without even flinching. White needs to find the means to make the idiom more responsive to such proddings. (reviewed on cassette)

—Bill Shoemaker

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PEOPLE TIME—Verve 314 510 823-2: *EAST OF THE SUN (AND WEST OF THE MOON); NIGHT AND DAY; I'M OKAY; LIKE SOMEONE IN LOVE; STABLEMATES; I REMEMBER CLIFFORD; GONE WITH THE WIND; FIRST SONG (FOR RUTH); THERE IS NO GREATER LOVE; THE SURREY WITH THE FRINGE ON TOP; PEOPLE TIME; SOFTLY AS IN A MORNING SUNRISE; HUSH-A-BYE; SOUL EYES.* (56:24/59:14)
Personnel: Getz, tenor sax; Barron, piano.

★ ★ ★ ★

It seems cruel to have to "award" stars to a document like this, where so much of the meaning is, at least to me, extramusical. It may not be the greatest Getz on disc, but it's likely the last. And it's as much a statement about courage, and perseverance, and creativity defining a life, as it is a musical experience.

Kenny Barron's informative, honest liner

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notes tell us that Getz was in great pain over the course of this four-night live recording, and he was literally out of breath after each solo. (Getz died exactly three months after the last night of this Copenhagen engagement, on June 6, 1991.) But there are no concessions to illness here; the tempos are mostly up, and Getz gives it everything he's got. From his entrance on "East Of The Sun" there's a palpable sense of urgency, of much that needs to be said. His playing has a hard edge—whether due to health considerations or his attitude at this time is hard to tell—and is full of felicitous details: the lively snap of his phrasing, with little bluesy inflections, on "Like Someone In Love"; the ironic Latin lilt to "Stablemates"; a gutsy wail on "No Greater Love" (where Barron, robust and lavishly ornamental elsewhere, turns playfully Monkish); a lean, rather than lush, reading of "Soul Eyes."

If, for me, the musical highpoints are the few ballads—beautiful storytelling on "I Remember Clifford" and "I'm Okay," and a benedictory rendition of Charlie Haden's lovely "First Song (For Ruth)"—they are the exceptions to the final self-portrait Getz is painting in this undoubtedly emotional performance. The aggressive way he attacks his material shows how Getz is rejecting sentimentality. There is no looking back—no "Early Autumn," no "Moonlight In Vermont," no "Desafinado," no "Blood Count." It just wasn't his way. It wasn't in him to go out on a note of serenity; Stan Getz went out a fighter. (reviewed on CD) —Art Lange



Little Village

LITTLE VILLAGE—Reprise 26713: *SOLAR SEX PANEL; THE ACTION; INSIDE JOB; BIG LOVE; TAKE ANOTHER LOOK; DO YOU WANT MY JOB; DON'T GO AWAY MAD; FOOL WHO KNOWS; SHE RUNS HOT; DON'T THINK ABOUT HER WHEN YOU'RE TRYING TO DRIVE; DON'T BUG ME WHEN I'M WORKING.* (46:22)
Personnel: Ry Cooder, John Hiatt, guitars, vocals; Jim Keltner, drums, percussion, "guitar composition"; Nick Lowe, bass, vocals.

★★★½

Little Village is an apt toss-off of a bandname for the year's finest all-star confab. The band is a village of its own devising, a sum-of-its-parts experiment in American roots rock. The players: Hiatt, underdog songwriter extraordinaire and singer who goes for the throat; Cooder, slide-guitar guru and back-porch musicologist; Lowe, ever-clever popster; and Keltner, veteran drummer with plenty of spicy



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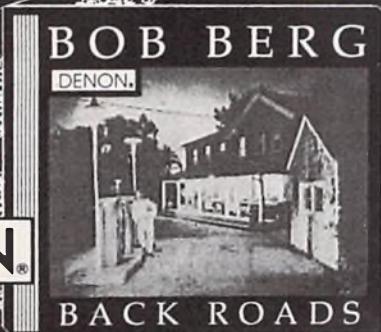
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rhythmic gravy.

As with the all-star band the Traveling Wilburys, Little Village can lean toward the off-the-wall humor that can result when four grown men with wisecracking wits get together in one place. Despite the goofball titles, "Solar Sex Panel" is pure feel-good juice, and "Don't Think About Her When You're Trying to Drive" is a ballad from where love and the proverbial road meet. Hearing tidbits of Cooder's unerringly tasteful guitar work—the obliquely inventive solo on "Inside Job," the slip & slide layered line on "Fool Who Knows," or the nasty-toned chain-gang riffs on "Don't Bug Me When I'm Working"—whets the appetite for hearing him stretch out.

But Little Village is by and large a songfest, and a collective endeavor. They get along famously. (reviewed on CD) —*Josef Woodard*



James Clay

COOKIN' AT THE CONTINENTAL—Antilles 314-510 724-2: *COOKIN' AT THE CONTINENTAL*; *SISTER SADIE*; *MOANIN'*; *CRAZEOLGY*; *EASY LIVING*; *GEORGIA ON MY MIND*; *BARBADOS*; *YOU'RE MINE, YOU*; *WIDE OPEN SPACES*. (59:34)

Personnel: Clay, David "Fathead" Newman (cuts 1-3, 9), tenor saxes; Roy Hargrove, trumpet (2, 3); Kirk Lightsey, piano (1-3, 5-9); Christian McBride, bass; Winard Harper, drums (1-3, 5-9).

★ ★ ★ ½

A DOUBLE DOSE OF SOUL—Riverside OJCCD-1790-2: *NEW DELHI (2 TAKES)*; *I REMEMBER YOU*; *COME RAIN OR COME SHINE (2 TAKES)*; *POCKETS*; *PAVANNE*; *LINDA SERENE*; *LOST TEARS*. (53:00)

Personnel: Clay, flute (cuts 1-3, 7), tenor saxophone; Nat Adderley, cornet (4-6, 8, 9); Victor Feldman, vibes (1-3, 7); Gene Harris, piano; Sam Jones, bass; Louis Hayes, drums.

★ ★ ★ ½

On these albums the jazz center of the world is Dallas, Texas, Clay's hometown. The tenor man, touted as a long-lost connection to Ornette Coleman, shows the raw Texas tone on *Cookin'*. *A Double Dose*, recorded 31 years earlier, in 1960, is a smoother affair. This is odd because the late '50s were when Clay and Ornette used to rehearse together. You'd expect the earlier album to convey more of Ornette.

This paradox aside, Clay does not play free jazz. But his oblique bop lines, emotional directness, and greasy-to-jagged intonation establish a geographical and spiritual kinship to Ornette. *Cookin'* adds Texans Newman and Hargrove on certain tracks, and we are transported back to the hard-boppin' '50s and

'60s—and maybe earlier on the two-tenor chases. This is solid mainstream jazz, which includes the three "Bs" of the genre: blues, bebop, and ballads. The performance of "You're Mine, You," the Heyman-Green ballad, is as pretty as the somewhat raw Clay concept gets; on the other hand, "Crazeology," the Benny Harris bop standard, sounds close to the outside edge as a duet for tenor and bass. Some of the other composers are Horace Silver (the title tune and "Sister Sadie") and Bobby Timmons ("Moanin'"), so you know we are in soulful territory here. Lightsey, McBride, and Harper settle into a suitable groove behind the Texans' lyricism. Cookin', indeed.

On *A Double Dose*, Clay appears on flute for four tracks—he seems an unlikely combination of Herbie Mann and Eric Dolphy—and Feldman's vibes add a requisite and pleasing coolness. His tenor is easygoing, although he's beset by squeaks on Adderley's "Pockets." The cornetist, whose different entrances on the two takes of "Come Rain Or Come Shine" remind us of the jazz ethic to make each solo fresh, is in good form throughout the album. Perhaps Harris is the biggest revelation. We know he can swing from his recent Concord albums, but his Red Garland-like block chords are a perfect condensation of '50s jazz piano. The team of Jones and Hayes (members of the Cannonball Adderley Quintet at the time, as were Feldman and Nat Adderley) is, as 'twas ever, steady as she goes. (reviewed on CD)

—Owen Cordle



Kronos Quartet

PIECES OF AFRICA—Elektra Nonesuch 9 79275; *MAI NOZIPO* (BY DUMISANI MARAIRE); *SAADE* (HASSAN HAKMOUN); *TILLIBOYO* (FODAY MUSA SUSO); *EKITUNDU EKISOOKA* (JUSTINIAN TAMUSUZA); *ESCALAY* (HAMZA EL DIN); *WAWSHISHIJAY* (OBO ADDY); *WHITE MAN SLEEPS* (KEVIN VOLANS); *KUTAMBARARA* (DUMISANI MARAIRE). (67:06)

Personnel: David Harrington, John Sherba, violins; Hank Dutt, viola; Joan Jeanrenaud, cello; Dumisani Maraire, ngoma, hosho, vocal, mbira (cut 12); Hassan Hakmoun, vocal, sintir (2); Foday Musa Suso, kora (3); Hamza El Din, tar (5); Obo Adday, donno, bekele, aketse, gidi, vocal (6); Radouane Laktib, oud, vocal (2); Said Hakmoun, bander vocal (2); Dan Pauli, hosho (12); the Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir (12).

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

From the outset, it was clear that the Kronos Quartet had in mind a very different objective from virtually any existing string quartet. In their

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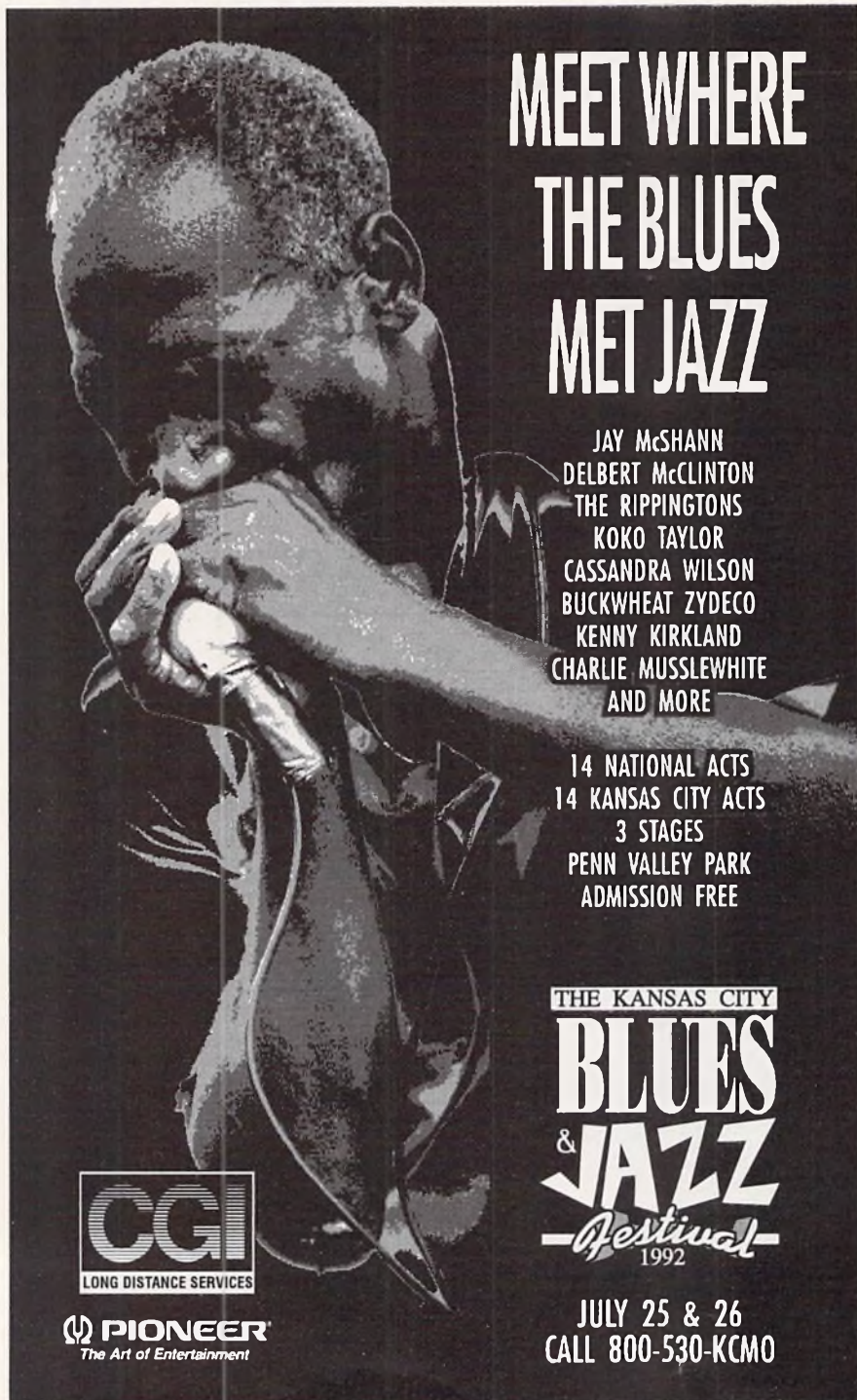
already rich and varied recording history, the Kronos has attempted to string up the music of Thelonious Monk and Bill Evans (with limited results), and has generally sideslepped norms of the medium. *Pieces Of Africa* is perhaps the most inspired detour yet for the Kronos.

The album is neatly framed by buoyant pieces by Zimbabwe musician Dumisani Maraire. Foday Muso Suso's "Tilliboyo" balances Suso's own kora playing with pizzicato responses from the quartet. Sudanese Hamza

El Din's passionate "Escalay" is the album's centerpiece. "White Man Sleeps," previously heard in an edited version on the Kronos album of the same name, was written by the white South African Kevin Volans, whose proximity to minimalism plays up that movement's African roots.

It's entirely fitting that *Pieces Of Africa* was released with the imprimatur of Nonesuch, a label which did much to bring the world's music into America's living rooms. Here, the

music of Africa—one of the musical power spots in the world at the moment—mates with that most Eurocentric invention, the string quartet, and the result is pure wonder. The Kronos saga continues to expand, distill, and to amaze. (reviewed on CD) —Josef Woodard



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Personnel: Cain, piano; Bruce Saunders, acoustic and electric guitars; Glen Velez, percussion.

★ ★ ★ 1/2

Moore/Karush/Velez

MOKAVE VOLUME 1—Audioquest AQ-CD 1006: *RAINLAND; WHY CAN'T IT BE; TAR; OCEANUS; LEATHER CATS; SONG FOR THE NEW CITY; AT PLAY IN THE FIELDS; IN A SENTIMENTAL MOOD; ABSTINENCE; A LA FATMA.* (53:07)

Personnel: Glen Moore, bass; Larry Karush, piano, percussion; Glen Velez, frame drums, percussion; Junior Homrich, percussion (cuts 6-8); Manny Ramos, percussion (6,8).

★ ★ ★ ★

Pianist Mike Cain attracted attention through his work with Anthony Cox and with Jack DeJohnette's Special Edition, but Cain's *Strange Omen* offers the best insight into a developing musical personality. Cain's music challenges the listener with an edgy ambivalence. Along with lyricism, there's an undercurrent of dissonance. Cain favors "polarity" as a guiding concept, and that may mean that he's not afraid to play something dark and vaguely troubling alongside bright tunes.

Cain claims Jarrett and Hancock as influences, but I also hear Corea in the last, upbeat pieces, and four solo piano sketches suggest Bartok as well. The moods reflected by Cain's original compositions can quickly shift from open expansiveness to brooding introspection with flashes of turbulence. Cain is a strongly rhythmic player, but he doesn't know how to use Glen Velez, who is too often relegated to keeping time. The percussionist sounds much more comfortable with *Mokave*, a trio which builds on and around his battery of frame drums and exotic percussion.

Mokave is spiritually akin to Oregon and the Paul Winter Consort, using the influence of folk music as a springboard for melodic improvisation. Pianist Larry Karush is at the center of

Mokave. His association with Glen Moore (and Oregon) is long-term, including the overlooked, out-of-print duet album *May 24, 1976*. Karush and Velez have worked together with the Winter Consort, and with Steve Reich & Musicians, participating in the 1976 landmark *Music For 18 Musicians*.

All this familiarity breeds a relaxed but intense collaboration. *Mokave Volume 1* is a showcase for Karush, who takes melodic leads, improvises, helps out on tabla, salutes Coltrane and Fatha Hines, and crafts half of the tunes, most notably the ingratiating, catchy "Song For A New City." Moore's bass has a beautiful tone with a strong vocal quality. He meshes so well with Velez that you wonder how those frame drums would sound with Oregon. (reviewed on CD) —Jon Andrews



Henry Butler

BLUES AND MORE, VOLUME 1—Windham Hill Jazz 10138-4: *Dr. Diddley; Blues After Midnight; Down By The Riverside; San Francisco Blues; Nightlife Shuffle; The Breaks; That Lucky Old Sun; Samba C; A Thing Of Beauty; Tritonal Commission; Jamaica Farewell.*
Personnel: Butler, piano, vocals.

★★★

Stripped down to the essentials, the New Orleans-bred pianist reveals more of his roots



Adrian Legg

GUITAR FOR MORTALS—Relativity 88561-1078: *Coging's Glory; The Netsman & The Laird; Mrs. Jack's Last Stand; Nanci; After The Gig; 7 Year Ache; A Candle In Notre Dame; Peita; Anu; The Gospel According To O. Henry; Waltzing With Jesus; Chicken Licken's Last Ride. (51:07)*

Personnel: Legg, guitar.

★★★

Adrian Legg may be a relatively new name on the acoustic guitar scene (actually, the electro-acoustic guitar is his ax-of-choice). But around the innerworld of the guitar, the Londoner is actually a veteran who delved into the R&D niche with Trace-Elliott and Ovation and, in the past several years, has fine-tuned his sometimes wry, sometimes romantic and naturally encyclopedic approach to the solo guitar.

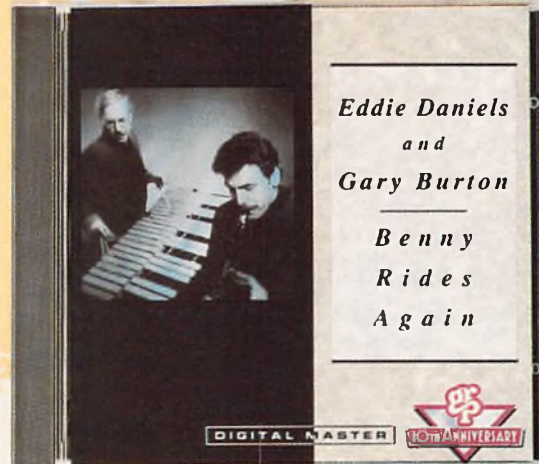
Even while *Guitar For Mortals*—his fourth album and second domestic release—is a more generally seamless and musical package than last year's dazzler, *Guitar And Other Cathedrals*, Legg is no one-trick pony. The British folk earthiness of the opening tune, "Coging's Glory," is but one stylistic stop along the path. "After The Gig" features rueful, rippling arpeggios; jazzy chordal voice-leading guide "7 Year Ache"; the lilting "Anu" might be heard in finer new-age bistros everywhere. But the blues-lubed slide piece "Waltzing With Jesus" belongs more in the soundtrack of a Wim Wenders film, and the skittering cluck-plucking of the closing tune, "Chicken Licken's Last Ride," is some fancy back-porch finger-work. Legg's happy medium of wit and eloquence is just what the guitar world needs right about now. (reviewed on CD)

—Josef Woodard

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on his second Windham Hill project. Henry hinted at this direction on 1990's *Orleans Inspiration*, with solo renditions of "Some Where," the bluesy "Goin' Down Slow," and "Dr. James," his tribute to the great New Orleans piano stylist James Booker. That album proved that you can take the man out of N'awlins, but you can't take N'awlins out of the man.

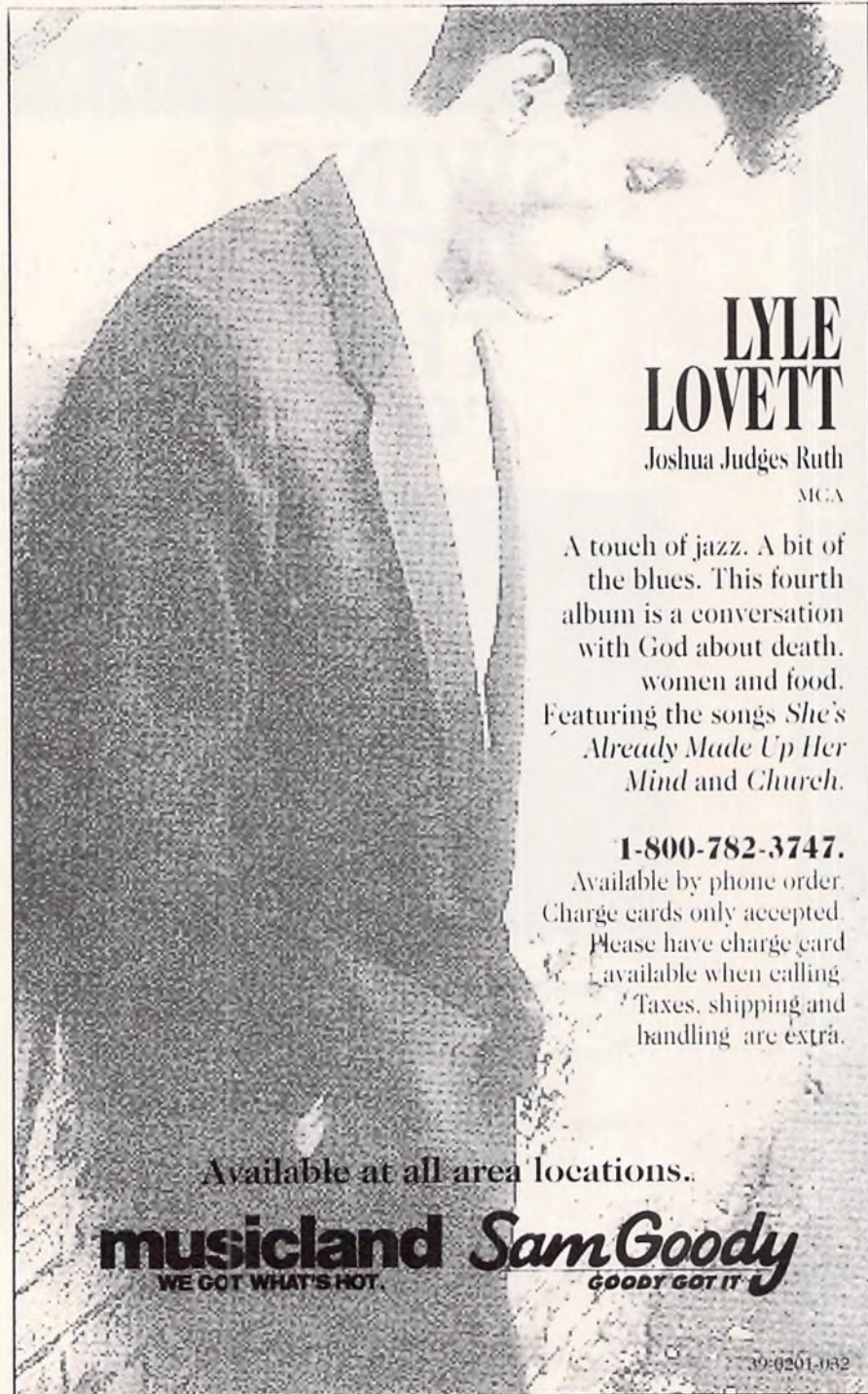
On *Blues And More, Volume 1*, produced by Windham Hill's George Winston, Butler stretches beyond the Crescent City to reflect other important pianistic influences, namely

Harold Mabern ("Tritonal Commission"), Chick Corea ("The Breaks"), and Vince Guaraldi ("Jamaica Farewell"). His rolling barrelhouse approach on originals "Dr. Diddley," "Blues After Midnight," and particularly "San Francisco Blues" is full of baroque Bookeresque right-hand flourishes but lacks the kind of funky grit that Dr. John brings to his solo piano work.

And then there is the matter of Butler's voice. He sings and scats with gospel fervor on the spiritual "Down By The Riverside," and his grandiose reading of "That Lucky Old Sun"

borders on the operatic. To me, it's a bit too stylized like a *Star Search* contestant pushing too hard. Definitely an acquired taste. Expect more of the same next year when Windham Hill puts out volume 2 (reviewed on cassette).

— Bill Milkowski



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Personnel: Fran, vocals, piano (cut 6), Hollimon, guitar, vocals (5), James "Thunderbird" Davis, vocals (10, 15), tambourine; George Porter, Jr. (1-4, 6-15), Jim Milan (5), bass; Lynn August, accordion, rubboard, piano; Sammy Berfect, organ, piano; Matt McCabe, piano (5), George Rains, drums, percussion; Danny Cochran, drums (5), Mark "Kaz" Kazanoff, alto, tenor, baritone saxophones; Ernest Youngblood, Jr., tenor saxophone; Keith Winkling, trumpet; Tater Britches, guitar (5)

★ ★ ★ ★ 1/2

Soul Sensation opens with 58-year-old veteran r&b singer Carol Fran storming into "Golden Girl," declaring that she's a fast-track mama who can belt out the blues with the best. And when she assertively sings, "I can still give Bonnie Raitt a whirl," playfully addressing the Grammy award winner with a fiery, "Look out, Bonnie... I'm gonna give you a run for the dough," you know this sassy blues beller means business. The first woman ever signed to a contract with the prestigious New Orleans-based Black Top label, does Fran deliver for the rest of the hour? You bet, aided by her collaborator and husband, veteran session guitarist Clarence Hollimon, who creates with his superb guitar stylings what Fran accomplishes with her vocals: a celebration of the rich and soulful blues tradition in an array of textures and colors. We're talking a full package of subgenres on the Houston-based duo's debut: sockin' r&b, blue ballads, jazz-flavored soul, sweaty rockers with ripping guitar licks, buoyant zydeco with spicy French accordion riffs, and exuberant gospel with juicy church organ lines.

Fran-Hollimon originals like the romping "Push-Pull" zydeco tune, the stunning slow blues "I Needs To Be Be'd With," and the

rousing "Box With A Hole In The Middle," along with Hollimon's two instrumental guitar showcases (one slow, the other a hummer), would suffice to make this collection a winner. But what makes it a gem are the impressive cover of Earl King's "I'll Make Your Life Sunshine," the spirited arrangement of the traditional gospel tune, "This Little Light," and the deliciously soulful interpretation of Sam Cooke's "Bring It On Home To Me"—the latter two numbers sung as duets with James "Thunderbird" Davis, who had worked with Fran in Guitar Slim's revue and later Joe Tex's band. Cooke's song has never been treated to a better recording, with the spontaneous Fran-Davis exchange so reminiscent of the lively banter between Carla Thomas and Otis Redding on the classic soul dialog, "Tramp." (reviewed on CD)

—Dan Ouellette



Diane Schuur

IN TRIBUTE—GRP GRD-2006: *THEM THERE EYES; THE MAN I LOVE; GOD BLESS THE CHILD; SWEET GEORGIA BROWN; GUESS I'LL HANG MY TEARS OUT TO DRY; 'ROUND MIDNIGHT; HOW HIGH THE MOON; BODY AND SOUL; BLACK COFFEE; LOVE FOR SALE; SOPHISTICATED LADY; THE BEST IS YET TO COME; EVERY TIME WE SAY GOODBYE.* (56:52)
Personnel: Oscar Brashear, Joe Davis, Warren Luening; Nolan Smith, Jack Sheldon, trumpets; George Bohanon, Dick Hyde, Charles Loper, Bill Reichenbach, Maurice Spears, trombones; Jeff Clayton, Stephen Kujala, Don Menza, Gary Foster, Lanny Morgan, James Walker, reeds; Alan Broadbent, piano; John Clayton, Chuck Domiano, bass; Dennis Budimir, John Chiodini, guitar; Jeff Hamilton, Joe LaBarbera, drums; Billy May, Johnny Mandel, Alan Broadbent, Clare Fischer, Jeremy Lubbock, arrangers; plus strings and woodwinds.

★ ★ ★ ★

A lot of prep, planning, and arranging talent obviously went into this deluxe concept album invoking the names of a dozen legendary lady singers who may or may not have influenced Diane Schuur. And by and large it's paid off in an excellent popular songbook collection that covers a wide spectrum of moods, tempos, and tastes, and showcases Schuur in consistently outstanding orchestrations.

The tune-to-artist relationship in this catalog of little tributes is often arbitrary, to say the least; Ivy Anderson, for instance, never sang "Sophisticated Lady." So literalists may point fingers. Musically, though, there's not really a loser in the litter. *In Tribute* is less a jazz album than a series of partnerships between Schuur and her five arrangers. Jeremy Lubbock and Clare Fischer feather her ballads with soft, self-

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effacing backgrounds that subtly italicize an emotion here and there but never upstage the singer. Alan Broadbent's tight big band charts on "Them There Eyes" and "How High The Moon" swing in a bold if conventional manner.

But in the company of Billy May, who provides the most straightahead writing on the set, Schuur scores a sensationally pulsing "Sweet Georgia Brown" and maybe the best "Love For Sale" since Ella Fitzgerald's 1956 version (although one could do without the background vocals at the end). They are the highlights of one of the better "standards" albums of recent years. (reviewed on CD)

—John McDonough



Don Pullen

KELE MOU BANA—Blue Note CDP 7 98166-2: *CAPOEIRA; LISTEN TO THE PEOPLE (BONNIE'S BOSSA NOVA); KELE MOU BANA; L.V.M. DIRECTOR AD ASSUNTO; YEBINO SPRING; DOO-WOP DAZE; CIMILI DRUM TALK. (56:01)*

Personnel: Pullen, piano; Carlos Ward, alto saxophone; Nilson Matta, bass; Guilherme Franco, timba, berimbau, percussion; Mor Thiam, djembe, tabula, rainsticks, wind chimes, vocal (cuts 3, 7); Keith Pullen (2), Tameka Pullen (2), vocal.

★★★★★

Pianist Don Pullen uses his signature technique—which involves sweeping and slapping the keys with the backs of his fingers and hands—to extend the instrument's melodic and rhythmic boundaries. On *Kele Mou Bana*, Pullen's third release as a leader for Blue Note, his percussive tendencies culminate in an album of Afro-Brazilian tunes.

Pullen has gathered an authentic, high-powered ensemble, the African-Brazilian Connection, starting with his percussionists, Brazilian Guilherme Franco and Senegalese Mor Thiam. These two provide clatter and beat out an insistent, colorful foundation for the band, which responds in turn. Carlos Ward's alto floats over, jabs at, or edges into the pulse, pushing the band ever forward as he digs deep and plays hard. And Brazilian Nilson Matta, a powerhouse of a bassist, infers a whole range of rhythms in every bass line, such as swinging and funking an Afrobeat all at once. Even the three vocal tracks on this record remain as concerned with rhythm as they do with melody.

In all, this kind of band is the perfect vehicle for Pullen's imminently groove-oriented, two-fisted piano style. Amid the many layers of complex beats and counter-rhythms—winding and pulling, pushing and circling—Pullen emerges as the driving force. (reviewed on CD)

—Suzanne McElfresh

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Tom Verlaine

WARM AND COOL—Rykodisc 10216: *THOSE HARBOR LIGHTS; SLEEPWALKIN'; THE DEEP DARK CLOUDS; SAUCER CRASH; DEPOT (1951); BOULEVARD; HARLEY QUINN; SOR JUANNA; DEPOT (1957); SPIRITUAL; LITTLE DANCE; ORE; DEPOT (1958); LORE. (51:48)*

Personnel: Verlaine, guitar; Billy Ficca, Jay Dee Daugherty (cut 7), drums; Patrick A. Derivaz, Fred Smith (7), bass.

★★★½

Verlaine is one of those shadowy figures lurking in the annals of recent rock history, peeking around corners, piquing curiosity and inspiring

cult adulation. A founder of the seminal new-wave band Television in the late '70s, Verlaine has since perfected the fine art of cryptic songsmithing.

Let us not forget, Verlaine is also a guitarist of singular—if quirky—vision. His rapid tremolo effect, quivery vibrato, and unlikely merging of rockabilly, folk, and pop from another planet conspire to form a style all its own—one poised between restraint, folk art-like simplicity, and obsessiveness. On his seventh solo work—and first all-instrumental album—Verlaine dishes out the same inscrutable yet alluring material that has made his solo discography an acquired taste. A tart sweetness drips from "Those Harbor Lights" and "Little Dance"; listen up, David Lynch. By contrast, "Ore" contains more than a little Captain Beefheartian loony spirit and rhythmic elasticity. The "Depot" series involves dark, picturesque meditations on a minor chord, evoking images of, you guessed it, beautifully desolate depots. Closing the set, "Lore" is the freest-blowing tune of the lot, a rumbling poem of drone tones and Verlaine's textural swipes.

A mood piece that grows on you, *Warm And Cool* is a project from out of the blue in which the title tells all. (reviewed on CD)

—Josef Woodard



Marc Beacco

THE CROCODILE SMILE—Nova 9143-2: A *DIRTY DANCE WITH JACO*; *THE CROCODILE SMILE*; *TOKOTTO KO BARILLO*; *FUNERAL FOR A FLOWER*; *PAPOUCHKI MAMOUSHKI*; *SLOW TRAIN TO CHIHUAHUA*; *STEAMBOAT LULLABY*; *BOGGIO VAN GOGH*. (43:15)

Personnel: Beacco, vocals, voice effects; Toots Thielemans, harmonica (cut 1); Mike Stern, guitar (2); Manu Katche, drums and Dominik Bertram, piccolo bass (3); Jon Hassell, trumpets (4); Didier Lockwood, violin (5); Martial Solal, piano (6); Bruce Grainger, bassoon (7); Steve Swallow, bass guitars (8).

★ ★ ½

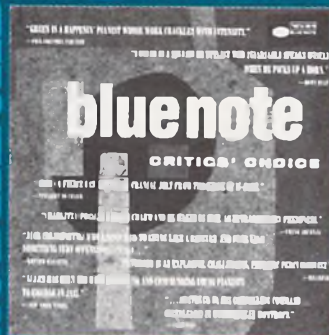
Marc Beacco, an architect of multi-vocal choirs and overwrought rhythms, airs a hot-house debut of studio duos. His voice, little processed ("no synthesizers, no sampling") and much overdubbed (he credits seven "additional voice operators"), tends to reedy, nasal tones, and choral styles (Afro-unison, Baltic bubkes, Manhattan Transferish overripe harmonies). Beacco's tight arrangements showcase diverse guests; with little flair for (or interest in) improvisation himself, he sets up vamps for Toots' keen harp, Stern's light burn, Hassell's muezzin brass.

Beacco sustains the beat with chugging rhythms, but, like many European musicians, has better feel for harmony than rhythm. Bright moments on "Train" come when ping-pong voices stop dead and the great, shamefully underrecorded Martial Solal grabs a stirring piano solo. This track shows better than most an integration of partners and sensitivity to the duet dynamic. Beacco's stultifying syllabifications (e.g., early Tarzan "chinnny chinnny onio-

dop") pique most annoyingly with dum-dum bass and nyah-nyah treble on "Papouchki." Faring far better with "ooh" and "aah," Beacco finales with prettily set melodies: "Lullaby," an affectionate paddlewheel pavane, counters expansive bassoon lines with gull cry, engine sigh; "Boggio" buoys a Swallow swoon. Except for students and fans of voice and recording, this album is a one-listen novelty. (reviewed on CD)

—Fred Bouchard

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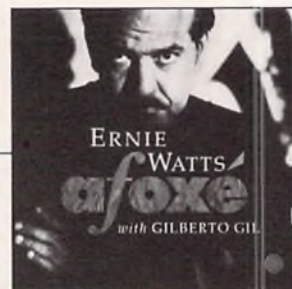


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Ernie Watts

AFOXÉ—CTI R2 79479: *THE GREEN GIANT (PT. 1)*; *SHOW ME; YOU'RE MY THRILL; FROM JAPAN; MEDITATION; RITUALS OF SPRING; A RACA HUMANA; AFOXÉ; GONDWANA; ORIENTE; THE GREEN GIANT (PT. 2); FROM JAPAN (PORTUGUESE VERSION)*. (56:09)

Personnel: Watts, soprano, alto, tenor saxes; Gilberto Gil, vocals; Robert Sadin, synthesized percussion, keyboards; Dunn Pearson, Kenny Kirkland, keyboards; Sharon Bryant, vocals; Marlon Graves, guitar, percussion; Marcus Miller, Eddie Gomez, Mark Egan, Victor Bailey, bass; Romero Lubambo, MIDI guitar; Frank Colon, Café (sic), Manolo Badrena, Mino Cinélu, Tony Mola, percussion; Jack DeJohnette, keyboard kalimba, drums; Ray Bardani, synthesized percussion.

★ ★ ★ ½

Last time Brazilian music was big, no one had



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(Justin Time 79379)



Justin Time

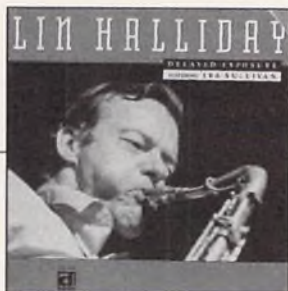
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heard of anything called world music. Times have changed, and so has the bossa nova. In the Bahia region of Brazil, *afoxés* are the secular descendents of hymns sung by the Afro-Brazilian *candomblé* sect. *Afoxé* offers a cozy pop marriage of African and Brazilian styles.

Both singer Gilberto Gil and saxophonist Ernie Watts wrote tunes for this recording, and Watts' hotter style works well in contrast with the more relaxed sultriness of Gil's compositions. Gil's voice could charm the calculator off an IRS auditor. His "Meditation," carefree as a stroll down a sunny beach, features empathic communication between bassist Mark Egan, Watts (on alto), and Gil. "Gondwana" finds Gil going with the loose, swinging flow delightfully set up by Watts, Kirkland, Gomez, and DeJohnette.

The slick approach heard on *Afoxé* (pronounced ah-fo-SHAY) makes it impossible to forget that the once-young Girl from Ipanema is all grown-up now. Watts knows exactly what he's doing on this disc, from the jazzier darlings around the melody on the dance tune "Show Me" to pop stylings the likes of which he perfected while working with Doc Severinsen's Tonight Show Band. His playing may not blaze new trails, but every note is where he wants it to be. (reviewed on CD)

—Elaine Guregian



Lin Halliday

DELAYED EXPOSURE—Delmark DE-449: *WOODY'N YOU; HOW DEEP IS THE OCEAN; DARN THAT DREAM; DOG EAR BLUES; MY ROMANCE; THE MAN I LOVE; ALONE TOGETHER; SERPENT'S TOOTH.* (66:12)

Personnel: Halliday, tenor sax; Ira Sullivan, trumpet, flugelhorn, flute (cut 3); Jodie Christian, piano; Dennis Carroll, bass; George Fludas, drums.

★ ★ ★

From the very first notes of "Woody'N You," it is clear that this is going to be a no-frills, hard-blowing date of the sort that made the late '50s such a thrilling time to be alive and listening. Ira Sullivan, the unstoppable, just gets better and better with age; and while it's always a pleasure to hear his full-bodied horns whatever the circumstance, it's even more rewarding to catch him on his old turf playing hot jazz with longtime Chicago buddies.

But this is Halliday's album, and, incredibly, his first as a leader in some 40 years of playing. Going back to the '50s, his rather peregrine career included stints with Maynard Ferguson,

with whom he recorded in 1959, Louie Bellson, and Philly Joe Jones; but, judging from his playing here, he seems to be more of a jammer than one given to the disciplined mastery of intricate charts.

There is no question that it is within the tradition of small-band bop to treat ballads as a series of improvised solo choruses, but Halliday also applies this loose, casual approach to other tempos as well, with the overall

impression being that of an informal sitter-in session in a club rather than an organized studio date. However, that is of minor importance when compared to his presumed indifference to tonal richness, especially since his main stylistic influence seems to have been mid-'50s Rollins. He does, though, have a compelling assertiveness in his beat and his note placements show intelligence. (reviewed on CD)

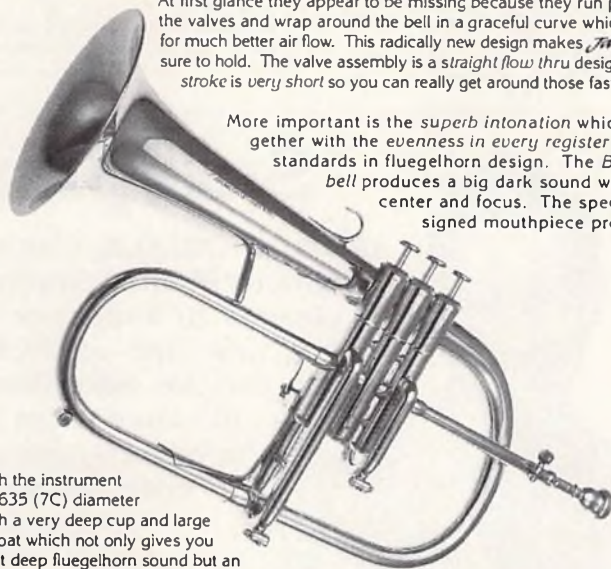
—Jack Sohmer

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RECORD & CD REVIEWS



Raymond Scott

POWERHOUSE—Stash 543: *POWERHOUSE; GIRL AT THE TYPEWRITER; DINNER MUSIC FOR A PACK OF HUNGRY CANNIBALS; BOY SCOUT IN SWITZERLAND; NEW YEAR'S EVE IN A HAUNTED HOUSE; WAR DANCE FOR WOODEN INDIANS; IN AN 18TH CENTURY DRAWING ROOM; TWILIGHT IN TURKEY; DEVIL DRUMS; SLEEPWALKER; OIL GUSHER; STEEPLECHASE; RECKLESS NIGHT ON BOARD AN OCEAN LINER; CELEBRATION ON THE PLANET MARS; THE PENGUIN; BUMPY WEATHER OVER NEWARK; SERENADE TO A LONESOME RAILROAD STATION; SIBERIAN SLEIGHRIDE; THE TOBACCO AUCTIONEER; MOMENT WHIMSICAL; THE TOY TRUMPET; CHRISTMAS NIGHT IN HARLEM; CONFUSION AMONG A FLEET OF TAXICABS UPON MEETING WITH A FARE; PETER TAMBOURINE.* (68:58)

Personnel: Scott, piano; Dave Wade or Russ Case, trumpet; Pete Pumiglio, clarinet; Dave

Harris, tenor saxophone; Lou Schoobe, Ted Harkins or Fred Whiting, bass; Johnny Williams, drums; additional personnel, identities unconfirmed (cuts 7,17,23).

★ ★ ★ ★

Some Scott sidemen thought he was nuts, and it's not hard to figure why. (For starters, check out those titles.) By the late '30s when these rehearsal takes and airchecks were recorded, the composer had a firm grasp of swing-band orchestration, and could make his six-man Quintette sound much bigger, but this music isn't jazz. Call it meta-jazz; Scott undermined the same musical conventions he employed, making them seem a trifle silly—he's a deadpan Spike Jones. You can understand why Carl Stalling used slivers of Scott recordings in his Looney Toons scores—they're cartoons already, chockablock with evocative chase sequences, chugging trains, toy-soldier marches, snake-charmer schtick.

The band sounded big, but it had a light touch, for which major credit goes to drummer Johnny Williams (father of composer John, Spielberg's Korngold). Scott was a fanatic for precision, and the Quintette was criticized back when for sounding mechanical; in fact, these sides have wonderful wacko spirit. Gunther Schuller (no big fan) has correctly pointed out Scott's influence on the John Kirby Sextet

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Michael
Brecker



and Alec Wilder's octets; modern descendants include zanies like Willem Breuker and the Microscopic Septet. This is smart music constructed to sound inane. It wears amazingly well. (reviewed on CD) —Kevin Whitehead



Cruel Frederick

WE ARE THE MUSIC WE PLAY—SST CD 290: *LITTLE ROOTIE TOOTIE; WE ARE THE MUSIC WE PLAY; THE FOOL & THE JEWEL; REFLECTIONS; BLIND MAN IN A SLEIGH; DEE DEE; THOSE DULCET TONES; MS. PINES; MINGUS AT MOMENTS; WELL YOU NEEDN'T; EXTENDING THE TING.* (53:55)

Personnel: Lynn Johnston, clarinets, saxophones; Hermann Buhler, alto saxophone (cuts 9, 11); Walter Zooli, trumpet (9, 11); Guy Bennett, bass; Mike Ezzo, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

This is what happens when you give youngsters too much free time—they go out and dig up instruments and try and play jazz . . . or something like it. Actually, listeners would never confuse Cruel Frederick's way with Monk with that of, say, a Christopher Hollyday—no sophisticated neo-con recreations here. Their scorching sentiments are closer to John Zorn's sandblasted bop than any of Wynton's clones' classical demeanor.

So Johnston, Bennett, and Ezzo like to play it hard and fast—the rhythm section, especially, prefers rock-crushing directness to jazz subtlety. It sounds to me like Johnston's been listening closely to Braxton and old ESP discs—and it also sounds to me like they're having fun. They take a leather-lunged look at Ornette's lighthearted "Dee Dee"; while "Ms. Pines" is "Misterioso" in everything but name. On the down side, the draggy "Mingus At Moments" displays none of Chazz's uplifting energy or raucous polyphony—that surfaces in "Extending The Ting." But it's not all bluster either; "Those Dulcet Tones" is a warm study in chiaroscuro, and "The Fool & The Jewel" a tender clarinet ballad.

Purists will no doubt be repulsed by Cruel Frederick's sacrilegious rowdiness. Me, I kinda like it. I think. (reviewed on CD) —Art Lange

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1 Milt Hinton

"Gutbucket Steepy" (from *Branford Marsalis' Trio JEEPY*, Columbia) Hinton, bass; Jeff "Tain" Watts, drums; Marsalis, tenor saxophone.

That's Dexter, right? No? The bass player sounds like either Major Holly or . . . Major Holly, because of the sound of the bass. Stanley Turrentine? Oh, wait a minute, Branford, with Milt Hinton. Yeah, and Jeff Watts. The thing that's classic about his bass is I'm used to that percussive sound that he plays. I'm not really as familiar with the sound of his bass. He sounds like he's been playing for three or four lifetimes. It fooled me, but then I started listening to the saxophone player, because Branford is like a chameleon. He's gifted that way. But how I guessed it was from the drums, 'cause 'tain plays a certain way. I'd give it 5 stars.

2 Charles Mingus

"Mood Indigo" (from *MINGUS MINGUS MINGUS MINGUS MINGUS, Impulse!*) Mingus, bass; Eddie Preston, Richard Williams, trumpets; Britt Woodman, trombone; Don Butterfield, tuba; Jerome Richardson, Dick Hafer, Booker Ervin, Eric Dolphy, saxophones; Jaki Byard, piano; Walter Perkins, drums.

Sounds like Wynton. It's Duke Ellington's "Mood Indigo." That is Duke? No? It's either Jimmy Blanton or Scott La Faro. See he's playin' in the lower register a lot and Scott La Faro played in the high register, but the way he plays in the high register, wait a minute . . . Charles Mingus. The lower register, he plays a lot of weird keys and in the lower register it's disguised. I played his book, and a lot of the stuff that sounded easy is hard when you're playing the book, so I learned to respect him a great deal after playing his music. I've never heard this recording, though. I'd give it 4 stars.

3 Michael Manring

"Watson & Crick" (from *DRASTIC MEASURES, Windham Hill*) Manring, two electric basses.

This is fretless. It's nice. Sounds like he has three layers of things going on, an ostinato line. It's bad. He did this live? No overdubs?

JD: No overdubs.

He's playing an electronic instrument that's wired because he's playing with both hands. That I know, because if he's doing it live that's the only way.

JD: Everything he's doing is in the fingers.

Everything is from the fingers? Stanley Jordan.

JD: It's two bass guitars.

The guy's playing two bass guitars simul-

CHARLES FAMBROUGH

by John Diliberto

Born into the still-heated jazz scene of Philadelphia in 1950, Charles Fambrough grew up alongside bassist Stanley Clarke, and became a disciple of the late Jimmy Garrison and another Philadelphia player, Jyrnie Merritt. He entered the jazz world full-time with Grover Washington, Jr. in 1970, by '75 performing in Aírto Moreira's Brazilian band. In 1978 he began four years with McCoy Tyner, recording *Focal Point*, *Live At The Great American Music Hall*, and *Horizon* (all on Milestone). In '82 he joined Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers for five years, alongside the Marsalis brothers. He recorded five albums with Blakey and then joined Wynton Marsalis' first quintet.

Along the way, Fambrough has recorded and performed with Freddie Hubbard, Rahsaan Roland Kirk, Shirley Scott, Roy Hargrove, Kenny Barron, Horace Silver, Courtney Pine, and Roy



BILL DOUTHART

Haynes.

Fambrough has just released his first album as a leader, *The Proper Angle* (CTI). It's a sophisticated album with a broad compositional scope and incisive playing, featuring Kenny Kirkland, Wynton and Branford Marsalis, Joe Ford, and Jeff Watts. This is Charles Fambrough's first Blindfold Test.

taneously? No shit! I don't know who that is.

JD: Michael Manring.

That's another level. That's very serious. He spent a lot of work on that. I take my hat off. Plus, it's beautiful. It's very colorful. It takes the instrument into another dimension that way. It becomes like a keyboard because you're not limited. I liked that, I'd give that 4½.

4 Dave Holland

"Four Winds" (from *TRIPPLICATE, ECM*) Holland, bass; Jack DeJohnette, drums; Steve Coleman, alto saxophone.

Sounds like Jack on the drums. Dave Holland? He's probably one of the freest-thinking bass players. He keeps the continuity of the tune but he walks the edge, plays the outer parts of the tune well. He's truly a major person I listen to, a major influence, him and Miroslav [Vitous]. Dave Holland's seriously underrated. I'd give that a 4.

5 Stanley Clarke

"Desert Song" (from *LIVE 1976-1977, Epic*) Clarke, acoustic bass; John McLaughlin, guitar; Darryl Munyungo Jackson, percussion.

This is beautiful. Stanley Clarke [within four notes]. His bow sound. I know Stanley and I know what basses he has. He has this French bass, a large bass that had a different sound.

He recorded with it, but he didn't play much with it live. Stanley's bad. He has an identity with the bow. It sings. It reminds me of a cello sound. This is a little out of the character of how he normally plays. This might be that little bass, though. This is really nice. I'd give it a 4.

6 John Patitucci

"Chestnuts" (from *Andy LaVerne's PLEASURE SEEKERS, Triloka*) Patitucci, bass; LaVerne, piano; Bob Sheppard, flutes; David Weckl, drums.

I like this music right away. I like that kind of music. Eddie Gomez. Let me listen to the solo. It's not Eddie Gomez. Mark Egan? He plays like that. He's a disciple of Eddie Gomez. Oh, this is Patitucci. He's got certain signature lines and he has a sound, too, that's identifiable. I love Patitucci, the way he plays. He plays the whole spectrum of the instrument. He can play in the ensemble and solo equally as well. He's playing a little bit out of his character, because he's playing a samba in the traditional sense of a Brazilian bass player and he got away from his sound until I heard some of his lines.

You know, with a lot of the young bass players, they're really proficient at copying styles. You have to listen to them really close. That's Dave Weckl on drums. The piano player has serious chops, but sound-wise, oh it's Chick. I gotta get this one. This is nice. I'd give that 4 stars; I like that. DB