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Jazz, Blues & Beyond

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Miles Lives!

Hancock,
Williams,
Shorter,
Carter,
& Roney
Pay Tribute

Branford &
The Tonight Show Band

Stephane Grappelli





The mid-'60s Miles Davis Quintet, minus one

HEYE WASSERBERGH

16 MILES DAVIS TRIBUTE BAND Miles Lives!

Playing the tunes they recorded, but never played live with Miles, his classic quintet of the mid-'60s—Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter, Tony Williams, and Ron Carter, with trumpeter Wallace Roney—embarks on a world tour. **Zan Stewart** was there at rehearsals.

Cover photograph by Dennis Keeley.

FEATURES

22 TONIGHT SHOW BAND The Revolution Might Be Televised

Changing the face (and ears) of TV music, the Tonight Show Band, with Branford Marsalis at the helm, is also one hot musical presence on the cool L.A. jazz scene. **Joe Woodard** reports.

28 STEPHANE GRAPPELLI From Silent Movies To CDs

His life reads like a map through the history of jazz. French violinist (and perennial *DB* poll winner) **Stephane Grappelli** continues to make sweet, beautiful music, as **Stephanie Stein** discovers.

30 HALL OF FAME LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

Monk and Ellington are just two of the giants of jazz piano who built on the foundation laid by **James P. Johnson**, the father of stride and this year's critics' choice for induction into *DB*'s Hall of Fame. **Rich Matteson**'s outstanding work as a performer and educator have earned him the 1992 Lifetime Achievement Award.

DEPARTMENTS

- 6 **ON THE BEAT**, by Michael Bourne.
- 8 **CHORDS & DISCORDS**
- 11 **NEWS**
- 13 **RIFFS**
- 34 **RECORD & CD REVIEWS:**
Stanley Turrentine; Dr. John; Christopher Hollyday; Christy Doran; Christy Doran/Gary Thomas/Bobby Previte/Mark Helias; Joe Lovano; Paul Motian/Joe Lovano/Bill Frisell; Hugh Masekela; Various Artists: Rockin' Swingers; Various Artists: Bloody But Unbowed; David Liebman; Grateful Dead; Miles Davis: Miles' Decade, Part 1; Tete Montoliu; Mike Clark & Paul Jackson; Jay Anderson; Dave Kikoski; Nels Cline; Eddy Clearwater; Tana Reid; Rob Schneiderman; Gary Thomas; Chico Hamilton; Rudy Linka; Aydin Esen; Justin Robinson; Nat Adderley; Lionel Hampton.
- 56 **BLINDFOLD TEST:** Mick Goodrick, by Fred Bouchard.
- 58 **CAUGHT:** JVC Jazz Festival, by Bill Milkowski; Jazz In June, by John McDonough; Chicago Blues Festival, by John Corbett.
- 63 **ARCHIVES:** Jaco Pastorius.
- 64 **PRO SESSION:** "Butch Morris' Conduction—Improvisation With A Wave Of The Hand," by Suzanne McElfresh.
- 67 **AD LIB:** "All In The Family," by John McDonough.
- 70 **SOUND BYTES/AUDITIONS:** Musical tidbits/young musicians deserving recognition.



Stephane Grappelli

HYOU VIELZ



JAN PERSSON

Hanging with the Miles Davis Tribute Band



MICHAEL WILDERMAN

The Miles Davis Tribute Band on stage at Wolf Trap

MILES LIVES!

By Zan Stewart

If you had a camera with you, it was a dandy photo.

Tony Williams, seated behind his familiar set of yellow Gretsch drums, played fills that careened "thuh-duh-dah-thuh-duh-dah" across his traps, while insistently stomping on his sock cymbal. Herbie Hancock, hunched over a Steinway D nine-foot grand piano, comped with chords as bright as headlights on a dark road. Wayne Shorter bent slightly forward toward his music stand as he played, his trademark tenor saxophone tone as crying as ever. Ron Carter stood between Hancock and Williams, and offered his usual supple bass lines. Wallace Roney leaned a little back at the waist and angled his green-anodized trumpet toward the ground à la Lee Morgan, and blew the melody of "Orbits" with Shorter.

Even in such inauspicious surroundings, this Sunday afternoon rehearsal was the beginning of a reunion of jazz royalty in honor of their former boss. Hancock, Williams, Carter, and Shorter hadn't played together since 1979, when they were all part of the band V.S.O.P. Now the gentlemen, and newcomer Roney, gathered together to prepare for something that was very personal: a six-month world tour through Europe, the Far East, and the U.S., paying tribute to Miles Davis, the man under whose aegis, from approximately 1963 to 1968, the foursome performed, recorded, and ultimately gained international jazz celebrity status.

The plan to undertake this venture came immediately after Davis' death last September. "We all called each other the day Miles died and decided to do it," said Williams following the rehearsal.

The inclusion of Roney, part of the explosive drummer's quintet for six years, seemed a natural. His own relationship with the departed giant went back almost 10 years—they first met in 1983—and he appeared with Miles at the most talked-about jazz event of summer 1991, the trumpeter's concert at the Montreux Jazz Festival (see DB Oct. '91).

At Montreux, Davis did something he'd vowed for years he'd never do: namely, reinvestigate tunes he'd recorded decades ago on such timeless albums as *Sketches Of Spain* and *Porgy And Bess* (both including marvelous arrangements by Gil Evans). At this now-legendary affair, Davis invited Roney to share the spotlight, and gave the younger man a good deal of solo space.

Earlier this year, Roney played what were originally Davis' parts on the recording *Re-Birth Of The Cool* (see "Reviews" Aug. 92). This album found Gerry Mulligan also looking back and performing arrangements that he, Davis, Gil Evans, and others had concocted in 1949 and 1950 for the famed *Birth Of The Cool* recordings.

"Miles loved Wallace. That says something right there," Hancock said later that Sunday.

"Wallace, like Miles, is always on the edge of a mistake," said Williams, amplifying the foursome's choice. "He isn't perfect. He plays more music than he plays trumpet."

The tour, which began in mid-June in Toronto, also included August dates at the Newport Jazz Festival and the Hollywood Bowl, and the Monterey Jazz Festival in September. The tour was preceded by a recording for Reprise Records.

During the Sunday afternoon rehearsal, the musicians were concluding 10 days of preparations for the album—which would be

completed in two very smooth-flowing sessions at the end of the following week—and the subsequent live engagements. (At press-time, the album is due for an early autumn release.)

A key factor for the participants was what tunes they would play. Both Williams and Hancock said that a majority of the material had rarely been heard live. Tunes such as Shorter's "Orbits" and "Pinocchio," and Carter's "R.J." "were recorded once and that was it," said Hancock. (Other numbers included on the tour and/or album songlist included Shorter's "Paraphernalia," Williams' "Pee Wee" and "Elegie," Hancock's "The Sorcerer," and a revamped version of the classic blues "Walkin'.")

Keeping things fresh was vital for the players. For instance, in a medley, Shorter linked his "Orbits," which was recorded in 1966 on *Miles Smiles*, with "Paraphernalia," which appeared on Davis' 1968 album *Miles In The Sky*. That Sunday, the medley required several run-throughs, with lots of stopping and starting, before the musicians were satisfied with their interpretation.

Next, they tackled a new Williams tune, "Elegie," which was dedicated to Davis. The melody, a series of extended notes that created a fog-like texture, was alternately attacked and stated quietly by Shorter and Roney.

The number was performed without solos—as were almost all these songs at rehearsal; and at its conclusion, Williams stood up and said, "Okay, next." It was a joke. He felt the selection needed some work. "Try to go outside the melody," he said to the hornmen. "I don't want it to sound static. Okay, let's try it again."

After two more passes, the drummer suggested that Shorter try the tune on soprano sax. He did, but soon Williams stopped him. "Play it louder," he said to his cohort. Shorter did, and later Williams gave him a boost, saying, "Sounds good with soprano, man." Then, looking at the others, he said, "Try it again, gentlemen."

About an hour later—after the group had taken good, long looks at "Elegie," "R.J.," and "The Sorcerer"—the rehearsal wrapped, and Hancock, Williams, and Shorter graciously made themselves available for some talk. Carter and Roney declined, the latter uncomfortable with an ear infection.

With the drummer and pianist sitting on the edge of the stage, and the saxophonist plopping down in a director's chair behind and between them, the three chatted convivially, and animatedly, about the new band, Miles, and other salient subjects. Williams and Hancock did most of the talking, but Shorter listened with keen interest, often turning his head from one cohort to the other, as if watching a tennis match.

ZAN STEWART: *How's the band feeling?*

TONY WILLIAMS: Feels good.

HERBIE HANCOCK: Yeah, it's starting to come along. It felt funny to me at first.

TW: Yeah, it did, but I'm glad that that part's over. Now we can get down to what we came here to do.

ZS: *Was there a concept to what you were going to do?*

TW: No concept, really. Just to do it.

HH: Uh, huh. We figured we'd get together here and figure out what and how we'd do it. Everybody had their ideas, different directions to voice. And during the process, we all changed our minds.

TW: Even today. We had thought about certain tunes to do, and we didn't like some of our choices. We don't want to be a ghost band. Take a song like "All Blues." That track was so wonderful. Certain things like that we decided not to mess with. We don't want to be, as Wayne said, like tracing paper, trace what's already been done. I don't think people want to hear just nostalgia.

ZS: *How do you like playing tunes like "Orbits"?*

TW: I haven't played most of them since I was with Miles. People listen to those records, but I don't; so it's like *deja vu* all over again, as Yogi Berra says.

WAYNE SHORTER: But it's not the music. The music is neutral, all of it.

TW: Right, it's basically the guys playing the way they play that makes it all worthwhile. Because we could play these tunes with some sad people and they'd be sad.

HH: We're feeding each other. The tunes are just examples . . .

TW: Of how we interact.

HH: Yeah, a tune is almost one solo chorus, just some structure.

WS: It reflects the moment.

HH: We use it as a skeleton almost, and what happens after that is the interaction between us . . .

WS: The feeling.

ZS: *Does it feel different than back in the '60s?*

TW: I won't analyze it. It's fun. We individually play a little differently, or have a little more in our arsenal, but the doing of it is like riding a bike. You never forget how that feels. We all feel the same way about each other. [At this point, Roney walks slowly through the back of the studio and heads toward the door. Hancock shouts at him affectionately.]

HH: Wallace! Hey, man, you're kicking butt. [Roney smiles back, acknowledging the compliment, and offers one of his own, then departs. Hancock returns to his thought.]

HH: When I played with Miles, I was in my 20s, so was Ron, Wayne [he turns to Shorter, and smiles] was older, Tony was younger, Miles was like 38. These were formative years for me. These guys helped me to develop. The way I play now is because of what they played then. You can imagine how important that is.

TW: So it brings back primal emotions to play these tunes with these people. It's very special to me.

HH: These guys, they're the best. But you gotta work your ass off, too.

TW: We're trying to take it from where we left off. We don't want to go back to 1963, when we started. We want to go back to 1968, and then go forward. This is supposed to be what it would sound like had we been playing together all this time.

ZS: *Do you feel Miles when you're playing? Is he a part of this?*

TW: To me, he is. He will always be part of everything I do.

HH: Yeah, I don't even have to think about it. It's not like [Hancock spreads his arms, as if to indicate a spirit presence], "Oh, Miles is here." It's not that.

TW: Someone asked me who's in charge here, and I said, "He's dead." [Williams, Hancock, and Shorter all laugh.]

TW: The guy got insulted. He thought I was putting him on.



Wallace Roney and Miles at Montreux, summer '91

DAVID ALLEN



The way they were: Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter, Tony Williams, and Ron Carter when Miles was their leader

Nobody's in charge, but if you want somebody to be, he ain't here. He passed away, and we're here because of that.

HH: Yeah. As we do this music, we keep referring to him, like, "This is something Miles said," or "These are some notes he'd play."

TW: And this music is what we want to express in his stead. We talk to Wallace, tell him to go for it, go where Miles was going, don't start where Miles was. Not that Wallace needs that advice. And we want Wallace to play Wallace, not echo anybody else. That's what Miles would want. Not having Wallace trying to be the next Miles Davis. He would hate that for Wallace.

HH: Of course, Wallace was strongly influenced by Miles.

WS: He had the right one to be influenced by.

HH: Right [*chuckling*].

TW: So all this fits together very, very well. Wallace is the best person to be doing this.

HH: He has the right attitude. He doesn't say a lot. The four of us are talking, shaping this stuff, but I never get the feeling he feels uncomfortable. He just steps right up and plays his ass off.

"Nobody's in charge, but if you want somebody to be, he ain't here. He passed away, and we're here because of that."—Tony Williams

A few days later, at his Los Angeles hotel room, Roney said that he felt the others "were playing their asses off, and I played okay. But that's my attitude. If I get comfortable, I won't grow. If I feel I did my best, I'd have nothing to strive for."

Hancock begins to allude to the way Miles approached a new tune, somehow making something that seemed unworkable work very well, indeed. Williams agrees.

TW: It's like Miles said one time, "You can make any musical idea work, you just have to know how to do it."

HH: Miles, when I'd bring in a tune, he'd look at it, maybe he'd have me play it, then he'd usually do something different with it. Now when I look back at some of those things I brought in, if he hadn't done that, they wouldn't have been anything. He made them come alive.

ZS: He was really a great editor, then.

HH: Right, right. He never said it wouldn't work.

TW: Like "Pee Wee." Do you know how that got written? I came in with . . . [*Here Williams sings the tune's opening motif, a nine-note four-bar phrase that gradually ascends almost chromatically from middle C to the G a fifth above it. Then he pauses.*]

HH: That was it?

TW: That was it. [*Hancock laughs robustly, bending over, Shorter*

chuckles more quietly. Then Williams stands up, puts his hands on his hips, and exaggeratingly thrusts out his chest.]

TW: [*in a voice that has a mockingly proud tone to it*] I thought, as I gave it to him, "Here Miles. How you like that?"

WS: [*singing*] Macho Man!

TW: [*in his normal voice, having sat back down*] But then he looked at me like, "Where's the rest of it?" Then he said, "Well, this is nice, but you gotta give me more." So I had to go finish it.

ZS: He was like a great paternal figure who encourages but is realistic.

TW: Right. Very pragmatic, but a very generous person. A lot of people don't know how generous.

HH: There were times at the beginning [*in the '60s*] when I was dissatisfied, mad. I didn't like what I was playing. One time, I thought, "Hell, I'll just play through everything," and I began to play more, and sometimes it clashed with what was going on. After we finished, I thought he was going to say, "Okay, you're fired." But instead, he said [*and here comes Hancock's version of Miles' rough, whispery voice*], "Why didn't you play like that in the first place?" I thought, "Oh, it's okay."

That took the shackles off.

TW: The thing I learned from him was how not to live in fear. He was fearless.

HH: Courageous.

TW: Miles was a bandleader who hired people who played as well, or better, than him. Miles knew that having great bands automatically made him look good, whether he was on the bandstand or not.

In Chapter 13 of his autobiography, Miles, written with Quincy Troupe (Simon and Schuster), Davis spent many pages recalling the excitement he felt working with Carter, Hancock, Shorter, and, especially, Williams: "I knew [they] were great musicians, and that they would work . . . as a musical unit. To have a great band requires sacrifices and compromise from everyone. They could do that. You get the right guys to play the right things at the right time and you got . . . everything you need. . . . If I was the inspiration and wisdom and the link for this band, Tony was the fire, the creative spark; Wayne was the idea person, the conceptualizer of a lot of the things we did; and Ron and Herbie were the anchors. . . . Although they were learning from me, I was learning from them, too."

HH: We brought a lot of stuff to the table, stuff nobody else was

doing. Miles changed his way of playing because of what we were doing.

TW: That was his genius. He let us . . . let him.

ZS: *It seems to me that that band was about stretching forms, but staying within forms.*

TW: I know a lot of people said that after we played the melody, we just started playing free. We never did that. We always stuck to . . .

HH: . . . Some form, some direction. It wasn't just free.

After the three-way chat broke up, I asked Hancock what he considered the trumpeter's legacy to be. He mused for a few seconds, then said, "When I heard that he had died, I immediately thought what he'd done, the people who had gone through his bands, the music he'd played. And I realized that he left a lot of himself here. So, no, he wouldn't be around to play those solos, but he'd still be here."

Later in the week, Williams said he, too, was proud to be part of that legacy. "I'm honored," he said by phone. "I'm humbled by it. But his legacy went beyond music. He was a role model. He represented self-esteem before we were talking about it. Miles was an American original, and America should be proud of him."

"I loved him a lot, and when I think about it," Williams said, his voice growing emotional, "I feel like crying."

Roney called Davis "his first hero." "I idolized him since I was a child, so playing with him at Montreux was like the greatest feeling in the world."

Asked what it was like to play with Williams, his usual boss, in another band, Roney laughed. "He's still the boss, and he's their boss, too," he said teasingly, laughing more. "But I get the feeling in

Miles' band he was the boss, too. Like Miles told me," and here Roney offered his impression of Davis' croaky voice, "'You know, trumpet players love great drummers.'"

Roney said he'd already heard people say that he was just regurgitating Davis' sound, but he's not buying it. "I don't want to imitate anybody," he said. "I want to digest all the guys that have come before me, and use their vocabulary my way. So I think if people listen, they'll hear lines that Miles didn't play. I want to make it a personal thing."

And while no one can say for certain what the future holds for this tribute quintet, Roney is definitely one person who wants that future to be bright. "I hope this isn't a one shot," he said. "I would love to always be associated with these guys." **DB**

THE BAND'S EQUIPMENT

Herbie Hancock plays a Steinway D piano exclusively

Wayne Shorter plays Selmer tenor and soprano saxophones, using Otto Link #10 mouthpieces and Rico #3 reeds with both horns.

Wallace Roney plays a Miles Davis model green-anodized Martin Committee trumpet with a custom-made, deep-cup mouthpiece comparable in diameter to a size 1C.

Ron Carter plays a Juzek bass that's about 100 years old, which is equipped with Barcus-Barry pickup and La Bella 7700 strings.

Tony Williams plays Gretsch drums. His set, with Remo heads, includes a 24-inch bass drum, with heads on both sides; a 5½ × 14-inch snare drum with double lugs; and 14 × 14, 14 × 16, and 18 × 16-inch floor toms, with Black Dot Remo CS heads. There are two floor toms mounted on the bass drum—a 13-inch and 14-inch. All his cymbals are Zildjian K's, except the sock cymbals, which are A Zildjian 15-inch heavies. His cymbal setup includes an 18-inch crash to his left, a 16-inch light-ride to his front, a 22-inch medium-ride to his right, and a 20-inch medium-crash to his far right. He uses Tony Williams Signature Gretsch 2B wood-tipped sticks.

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The Revolution Might Be Televised

TONIGHT SHOW BAND

By Josef Woodard

Less than a year ago, the offer came, the one that wouldn't be refused. Jay Leno, *Tonight Show* host heir apparent, wanted to know if Branford Marsalis cared to inherit the spot held down by Doc Severinsen for 30 years of musical leadership on *The Tonight Show*. More precisely, would he care to inherit the entire bandstand, create his own band, and reformulate the musical direction? The answer is unfolding before

America's eyes and ears.

On May 22, 1992, Severinsen signed off the air. On May 25, the new, leaner eight-piece band, with the new regime, began. Now, several of the strongest young contenders in jazz head to beautiful downtown Burbank five days a week to wage their quietly revolutionary experiment on network television.

Where else on nightly national TV can you

hear such a rich gumbo of American music, spanning from Thelonious Monk's "Bye-Ya" and John Coltrane's "Giant Steps" to fusion favorites by Weather Report and Mahavishnu Orchestra to music by James Brown and Led Zeppelin to archival New Orleans chestnuts? Or, on any given night, we might hear Kenny Kirkland's "Steeple Faith" or Bob Hurst's Monkish "Roused About."

Yes, it's true that this musical bounty comes on the air in frustratingly tiny sound bites, leading in and out of commercials, but revolutions begin gently, in small, well-considered steps.

"Branford was the first choice," Leno comments about picking his musical sidekick. "There really was no second choice. This sounds narcissistic, but I wanted someone who was to music what I am to comedy." Executive producer Helen Kushnick echoes the sentiment. "He and Branford Marsalis are the same person. They have the same work ethic. They just

have nothing in common. For Jay, it's comedy and cars, and for Branford, it's sports and music. But that's why they fit together so well."

Marsalis and Leno are sitting in Leno's small, comfortably messy inner sanctum of an office at NBC in Burbank, a few hours before 5:30 showtime. Their rapport is obvious.

Leno: "You have a situation where he calls all the shots, rather than me telling him what to do. He tells me what we're going to hear tonight, which is fine with me."

Marsalis, grinning: "Can you believe this guy?"

Leno continues, "It makes me look smarter. If it works, I say, 'Yeah, I picked this tune myself.' If it doesn't work, I say, 'Oh yeah, Branford picked that tune.'"

Marsalis comments, "I never thought the show could go wrong, from day 1. There was never a second when I thought any problem we might have could be the result of the product. It would have to be something else, some great scandal, a picture of me with a goat or a dog," he laughs.

Leno appreciates the wild-card name-that-song diversity of the musical cues. He grins, "With the other shows, you say, 'Oh, that's 'Kind Of A Drag' by the Buckingham.' It's like the difference between *The New York Times* crossword puzzle and the *TV Guide* crossword puzzle, where you see things like 'Rin Tin blank.'"

Courting musical acts who would have been out of place on the old *Tonight Show* is a factor in the new show's design. "Years ago, with a show like this, you had a music act and watched it at home on your seven-inch speaker. I remember seeing the [Rolling] Stones on Ed Sullivan," he cups his hands over his mouth and mumbles, "I can't get no satisfaction. . . ." The vase on top of the TV would rattle and your mom would say, "Turn that down!" It just sounded tinny—acts that sounded unbelievable live and on records.

"Now, you have essentially high-tech TV with stereo, which is almost as good as FM radio. So music plays a bigger role."

Music may play a bigger role than anyone bargained for, in terms of staking new ground. As keyboardist Kenny Kirkland asserts, "It's great that I'm part of this opportunity to play jazz in people's houses all over the country. Jazz musicians are always saying that they wish everybody could hear the music and understand it as an American art form. In a way, that's happening."

Bassist Bob Hurst has another perspective on this unique job opportunity. "I thought it was a good chance, especially us being a predominantly black band, for that to be seen all over America. For social

reasons, I thought it was great. Also, I can't think of another band with this much talent that can play as many different kinds of music. Most people haven't been exposed to good music. I'm a believer in the idea that once you expose people to quality, that's going to strike them on some level whether they know it or not."

It's 2 p.m., three and a half hours to the second before the downbeat of Marsalis' funk-vamp theme song. Marsalis, in bike shorts and a T-shirt, is sitting on the couch in his small command-post office upstairs at NBC. The couch is the sole creature comfort in a work-intensive atmosphere which houses a mixing console and a stereo on which Marsalis does his homework.

At the moment, he puts *Madame Butterfly* on the CD player and occasionally sings

be successful, I think it has to reflect a certain philosophy. For other shows, it would be difficult to have musical guests like ours because it's truly not their philosophy."

Does he have a sense of mission on the show, a notion of spreading the gospel of jazz? "We're just spreading the gospel of good music, if we're spreading the gospel at all. If you're going to hire these wonderful, phenomenal musicians, why play nothing? Why just play a string of 30-year-old Motown tunes? That wouldn't make any sense."

As for direction from above, "Jay Leno and those people don't care what we play," Kirkland says, with a note of surprise. "We can play anything. He [Marsalis] could have written a theme for the show that was atonal, and they would have said, 'Okay.'"

Marsalis' new theme song is, in fact, a



Branford mugs with that comedy guy

along. "Pavarotti can sing, man," he shakes his head in awe. The week earlier, he played sax alongside Marilyn Horne as she sang "Bewitched" on the show.

Let it not be said that the musical focus of the new *Tonight Show* is singleminded. "It should be an American show," Marsalis insists. "There are no shows other than this that really represent America. For a show to

fairly faceless number with a pentatonic sax melody. It has been criticized for not having the melodic infectiousness of the Paul Anka-penned *Tonight Show* theme beamed into living rooms for 30 years. Marsalis comments that "the thing people don't realize is that what is a swing tune to us now was, at that time, a pop tune. Paul Anka wrote the theme, and he is not a jazz musician. It was a



pop tune. Well, that's not what pop music is anymore. It didn't make any sense to try to do that."

Not one to mince words or indulge in idle show-biz lip service, Marsalis can be gracious one moment, grating the next, by turns amiable and cocky. He's a genteel giant with a hidden set of fangs and a steely independence.

"They like swing music out here. We play that raunchy, rough-ass, aggressive, New York shit."

—Branford Marsalis



"I constantly brag about the fact that I work with musicians like [drummer] Jeff Watts and Kenny Kirkland and [guitarist] Kevin Eubanks who can play anything. Why not prove it? Why be stuck playing things that 60 percent of the people like? I didn't make the reputation I have by playing the shit that 60 percent of the population likes."

While much of Marsalis' discography deals with his brand of neo-hard-bop, on this show, he is able to explore his true musical roots. "I was a fusionhead," he confesses, without prodding or coercion. "I was very fortunate to grow up while real fusion was happening, as opposed to that bullshit they call fusion now," he laughs. "'Contemporary jazz.' Fake samba beats and major keys. It's just funny. It's cute music to listen to. But if you grow up listening to [John] McLaughlin. . . ."

Musical coordinator Don Sweeney enters with a chart for the *Dateline* NBC theme, a walk-on musical cue for that night's show. He pops a cassette in the machine. "People get paid money to write this," Marsalis laughs. "How long is that? 32 seconds? That's too long." He hears the muted rumble of the Delbert McClinton band practicing downstairs and he turns on an intercom to check out the groove for a moment, then turns back to the task(s) at hand.

For many of these musicians, *The Tonight Show* is tantamount to a rare "regular" job. Warming up in his dressing room before a rehearsal, trumpeter Sal Marquez says, "Well, if you'd care to consider the experience I had with Buddy Rich and Woody Herman's bands on a regular basis—bussing it—that was sort of a regu-

lar job. But this is a *creme de la creme* sort of job."

Though born and raised in Texas, Marquez has called Los Angeles home for years. His reputation has taken off this year, thanks to Dave Grusin, who used him on the score for *The Fabulous Baker Boys*—which caught Marsalis' ear. Marquez was also featured on the *GRP All-Star Big Band* album and recently released his debut as a leader, *One For Dewey* (also on GRP).

The day of the interview, Marquez was reeling a bit from a low turnout for his regular Sunday night spot at the Vine St. Bar and Grill in Hollywood. "I'm a little disgusted that even the so-called jazz lovers here can't find the time to come out and listen, and support one of their own. They're crying about the fact that Branford hired most of the guys from New York City and just hired me from here. But what kind of support do I have? I haven't ever had support in this city, and I'd like to get some now.

"I've been living here for so long, and there's a certain feeling here that even guys like Kenny and 'Tain—beautiful, sensitive musicians—also fear that they'll get jaded and that they'll lose the passion. But that's not going to happen. Once they've got it in them, it's embedded there. That's how I like to approach my music—with a lot of passion and love and fire."

Drummer Jeff "Tain" Watts has been playing with Branford for nearly a decade, first with the Wynton Marsalis Quintet, and, since 1989, as a critical figure in Branford's bands.

"The positive thing about the show is that it's steady and you can be in one place and develop a routine. The only thing I can think of that might be negative is that you don't get to stretch out, per se; but it's just a different discipline of trying to compress whatever you would do in those couple of minutes. From a musical standpoint, it's just more functional than artistic. But it's cool: there's an art to performing in that function."

The need to stretch out is a common "affliction" in the band. "One hour a day is not quite enough playing for me," trombonist Matt Finders laughs. "I think everyone's frustrated with not playing at night anymore."

Their frustration is L.A.'s gain. Inevitably, the musicians have begun to get into the local clubs and stretch out. Marsalis has settled into Lunaria, a local restaurant with a jazz policy, as a stomping ground. One summer night, Marsalis, Tain, Hurst, and Kirkland played a long set there after serving up a typically diverse musical menu in Burbank between 5:30 and 6:30 (including the Mahavishnu Orchestra's "Meeting Of The Spirits"—another network first!—and Jeff Beck's "Led Boots").

Live blowing can be an antidote to the

CHRIS HASTON

sound-bite aspect of their day gig. The quartet unleashed the kind of extended, probing solos and rumbling ensemble intensity that you rarely hear in the generally staid terrain of L.A.'s jazz scene.

And yet, Marsalis is all too aware of the potential pitfalls that await the practicing musician on the L.A. jazz scene. "It ain't about self-expression," he says. "It's just that we have this certain formula that we use to learn how to become good musicians. Now that we have this wonderful gig, we don't get rid of the formula. That is what leads to the demise of musicians, and there are a lot of musicians I could use as examples. These are musicians who got sick of New York, came to L.A., and stopped doing the thing that made them great in the first place.

"I'm a jazz musician," Marsalis continues. "That's why I can play all sorts of different kinds of music. It's funny when people say, 'Now jazz is going to get a fair shake.' Hey, man, the people have spoken. They just don't like jazz. They don't understand it. That's fine with me. That's what those clubs are there for. Now, we don't have to worry about making money, so we can play in these 100-seat clubs just for the hell of it. We get some change, some grocery money for the week.

"What I hope to do in Los Angeles is to play in different parts of the city and get a whole bunch of high school kids to come down and start checking us out. I want to influence their playing, their musicianship."

"It's different out here," Kirkland comments. "In New York, people playing will be making more of a creative, personal statement. Out here, it's not so much of that. People will be playing Charlie Parker tunes, which is cool; but I'm just used to the idea of expressing your own voice, whether it's valid or not." "They like swing music out here," Marsalis comments. "We play that raunchy, rough-ass, aggressive, New York shit."

Part of what distinguishes this TV band and gives it a fresh perspective is the fact that none of them ever entertained the notion of being in a TV band.

As Watts notes, "If we saw in the newspaper that they were having auditions for the Tonight Show Band, I'm sure none of us would try out. But it's cool. Jay's a gentleman, a funny and very natural individual. Everyone on the staff, as far as I know, has been cool. It's like a vacation. It's cool. It's going to get better and better."

Percussionist Vicki Randle concurs: "For us, we're thinking, 'It's a good opportunity and it's a very nice gig'—but it's not what we really want to do. It's just TV. There are a lot of people out there for whom this would be

the dream come true.

"It never crossed my mind to work in television," says Randle in her dressing room, getting ready for another show. "Television seemed like the antithesis of real music," she laughs, then pauses. "Nothing personal. See, I don't want to say things like that because then it makes it seem like I'm slagging the old band. I have lots of respect for those guys. But the medium itself makes

it difficult to play anything worthwhile."

The Bay Area-based musician, a multi-instrumentalist and vocalist (and, incidentally, the first female musician in *Tonight Show* history), is well-suited to the task of musical-genre hopping. "I've played with a wide array of people, like Laura Nyro, Lionel Richie, George Benson, Kenny Loggins, with country bands. I've played keyboards with Sheila E. I like being diverse."



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For Kirkland—whose busy life as a sideman has taken him (and Marsalis) around the world with Sting, and whose jazz work has established him as one of the finest around—the new job is therapeutic. “I’ve never had something in my life like this,” he says. “It’s kind of like a 9-to-5 job. I just don’t go in at 9. But I kind of like that. I need that, because I’ve never had it in my life.”

Eclecticism is nothing new to guitarist Kevin Eubanks, who was weaned on rock, funk, fusion, and straight-ahead jazz. His new album, *Turning Point*, his first for Blue Note, is a much tougher-edged statement than most of his previous pop-jazz projects for GRP (see “Review” July ’92). At the moment, he’s especially sensitive to the issue of crossing stylistic boundaries.

He offers, “If it’s some authentic stuff and it feels real good, I feel good playing rock or jazz—if it’s really rocking or if it’s really swinging or real funky. When people say, ‘You jump from this bag to that bag,’ that really cheapens your whole personal history. It’s shortsighted. It’s like speaking different languages. It’s a natural thing to adapt to your environment.”

The Tonight Show Band is one context that invites—and pays handsomely for—eclecticism. “For me,” Eubanks continues, “this gig lets me play Jeff Beck, Zeppelin, Hendrix, John McLaughlin, Wes Montgomery, originals by Kenny Kirkland . . .

“This gig lets me play Jeff Beck, Zeppelin, Hendrix, John McLaughlin, Wes Montgomery, originals by Kenny Kirkland . . . that’s part of the prerequisite for doing the job.”

—Kevin Eubanks



that’s part of the prerequisite for doing the job.”

Watts: “As far as playing different musics, a lot of musicians tend to be jaded towards one or another, and there are all kinds of cliques. Basically, you’re guilty of not being able to play different styles until proven innocent. So this is a good situation to check that out in, because it’s with people I know and trust.”

The notion of covering a stylistic gamut within a single night’s work also appeals to trombonist Finders, who first met Marsalis when both played with Clark Terry (another

Tonight Show alumnus, coincidentally). “Back in New York, I did all sorts of gigs—jazz, rock, dixieland, Latin, Broadway, and other things. But it was always with a different band every night. Here, it’s all rolled into one.”

The band is locked into a five-year contract but, needless to say, the *Tonight Show* gig is not a be-all-and-end-all for Marsalis & crew. “There are so many other things to do in life, for me,” he says, back in his office. “Some old guy grabbed me in the street and said something like, ‘You were dissing Doc.’ I said, ‘No, man, I wasn’t dissing Doc.’ ‘Yeah, you were. You young people think you’re so hip.’ Some guy sent me a letter like that, too. He said, ‘Any guy in that band could blow you guys away.’ He said, ‘Let’s see if you can last for 30 years.’”

“What would make anybody think that I would want to do the same thing for 30 years? Not to blame them for doing it for 30 years; they had different priorities than I do. But based on all the things that I have in my resumé, what would make anybody think that I would want to do one show for 30 years—that I would want to be on the jazz scene and become one of the most respected musicians out there and then, at the age of 30, disappear for money? All of a sudden, I’m 60, doing this? Shee. Hold your breath.

“It’s a great life. It’s nice. But life wasn’t meant to be easy.” **DB**



NBC PHOTO

From Silent Movies to CDs



TERI BLOOM

STEPHANE GRAPPELLI

By Stephanie Stein

The small, dapper Frenchman looked up as I entered the room, put aside the earphones he had on, and smiled. He set them down on the coffee table next to a portable CD player, beside the gleaming 200-year-old violin sitting in its case. Stéphane Grappelli, the world's foremost jazz violinist, had been listening to a recording he'd made with pianist McCoy Tyner. Though it was still morning, it seemed as if he'd been awake for hours, listening, practicing. He politely greeted me and thanked me for being so punctual. He recounted a media mishap, when another journalist appeared for an interview an hour late, with no apologies. The writer then asked him how many people were in the Quintet of the Hot Club of Paris (the group Grappelli formed in the '30s with Django Reinhardt, the legendary gypsy guitarist), and insisted on misnaming one of the personnel. "I simply asked him to leave," said Grappelli with a Gallic shrug. "No interview. Who needs such silly questions?"

Grappelli, who will turn 85 in January, related this incident with candor, implying that life is too short for such nonsense. Active as ever, he had stopped off in New York City before beginning his annual U.S. tour this past spring. For these concerts, Grappelli was reunited with guitarist Bucky Pizzarelli—an old friend—and Jon Burr,

who often accompanies him on bass. A typical evening is generously studded with the jewels that Grappelli co-wrote with Django—"Minor Swing," "Daphnis," "Nuages." Grappelli's performances continue to amaze. His playing exemplifies improvisational mastery, his tone is crystalline, and every phrase is underscored with sheer joy. Pizzarelli, a consummate musician himself, generates the kind of conversational intimacy that nourished Grappelli's and Django's musical union. Echoes rang from the past.

*"My only chance was to play
the music that comes from the
skies, from heaven."*



Grappelli's past coincides with many historical benchmarks, musical and otherwise. Born in Paris, he came of age as his native city was reveling in the spirit of the Jazz Age. He was raised by his father, a philosophy teacher who instilled a great love of music in his son and gave him a violin when he was 10. By the time he was 15, Grappelli began playing for silent movies. His first

exposure to jazz came from a gramophone store near the cinema where he worked. In between shows, he went and listened to mediocre French versions of American tunes and the scant number of American jazz records that arrived a couple of years late.

"The first real jazz record I heard was with a group called Mitchell's Jazz Kings and the tune was 'Stumbling,'" Grappelli recalled in his fluent but heavily accented English. "When I heard that, I thought, 'That's my music and that's what I want to play.' They were all black artists on that record, great musicians.

"So my destiny changed. I had no ability as a concert artist, I'm a complete autodidact. My only chance was to play the music that comes from the skies, from heaven. So God gave us jazz music. Today you need technique to play jazz music because it is developing every year. But in those days it was easy, it was simple. And the really great thing with jazz is you can improvise, and that's what attracted me."

Grappelli spent the next few years playing with various dance bands, performing on piano and/or violin. In 1933, while changing a broken string backstage during a tea dance, he first met Django. They began playing together frequently and soon became the quintessential odd couple. Grappelli was cultivated, while Django was barely

literate; Grappelli was responsible to a fault, while his new partner was moody and late more often than not. Musically, they were a perfect match. Using American jazz tunes as their catalyst, they developed a sound and concept that established them as among the first bona-fide foreign jazz musicians. Their Quintet used two rhythm guitars and an acoustic bass, a subtle yet emphatic foil for Grappelli and Django's inspired improvisations.

"At that time, I wanted to play jazz the same way a classical quartet or quintet would play," Grappelli explained. "I hated to see people dancing in front of me when I played, or eating—music must be apart. I don't know which is worse, the dancers who dance at the wrong tempo or someone in front of you saying, 'Hey waiter, give me some mustard!' By that time, I was disgusted. I told Django that from now on we were going to play to be listened to.

"I was lucky to start in 1937 the way I wanted. The public sat there and listened to our music. Because after all, a guitarist like Django, you can't find that everyday. And we got to prove our music was valid. During the French Exhibition in Paris in 1937, we were engaged by a fantastic woman called Bricktop, one of the queens of the night-clubs. She booked a restaurant for three months, for the duration of the Exhibition. The place was so small, she didn't have room for a conventional group. So she booked us and all the world came to see us. It was *incroyable*—we met Louis Armstrong and Cole Porter, who just composed a song for Mabel Mercer called 'I've Got You Under My Skin.' In those days I was playing the violin with Django, but when Bricktop or Mabel Mercer wanted to sing, I sat at the piano. We had such incredible visitors—and high-society people. You know I was born very poor, so I liked their kind of smell.

"So *voilà*, after that, I said I will never play for dancers anymore, and we started to do concerts. The first one we did, about 100 young people came. Sixty years ago, our group was considered *avant garde*, it was very modern. In any case, it was like a growing plant, maybe a rose. Why not? So more and more, we got well-known. All because I was not going to play anymore for *les poupettes* who dance out of time."

The Quintet thrilled audiences, and performed and recorded extensively between 1934-'39. They were in England at the onset of World War II, where Grappelli chose to remain, while Django and the others returned to France. Although Grappelli and Reinhardt were reunited on occasion after the war, their partnership had waned. Reinhardt's health was also failing, and he died in 1953. By then, Grappelli had already started leading his own groups, and he performed in prestigious French clubs and

hotels throughout the '50s. During the '60s and '70s, his international reputation was greatly enhanced by numerous festival appearances.

As the decades keep going by, Grappelli's popularity has only increased. His flexibility, humor, and irascible sense of wonder have undoubtedly helped him sustain such a lengthy and rewarding career. A perennial winner in both DB's Readers and Critics polls and a member of the Hall of Fame since 1983, his



Grappelli with bassist Jon Burr and guitarist Marc Fosset

"I don't know which is worse, the dancers who dance at the wrong tempo or someone in front of you saying, 'Hey, waiter, give me some mustard.'"



stature has been upheld by countless recordings and performances in the company of such jazz masters as Duke Ellington, Benny Goodman, Joe Pass, and Oscar Peterson. The sheer variety of musicians he has worked with is astonishing. His collaborations have encompassed everyone from Stuff Smith to Yo-Yo Ma, and he's influenced everyone from bluegrass fiddler Vassar Clements to the rising young classical star, violinist Nigel Kennedy. His love of *anything and anyone* good in music is unequivocal. (See "Reviews" Nov. '91.)

"I'm attentive to every kind of music, I love every kind of music," Grappelli said, as the interview drew to a close. "I love Chinese music when I'm in a Chinese restaurant. I can listen to a Beethoven Symphony, then immediately Louis Armstrong without any preparation, because that is great music. It's a gift to be like that, we are lucky to be like that.

"And I must say that the public is the best to me here, because you invented this music—I never forget that jazz started here in America with the great black artists. That's why you are so good here, you are encouraged to play. People scream, and sometimes they scream at the wrong time, but it is fantastic.

"Just before you came, somebody called from Chicago, and said, 'There are so many groups still imitating you!' After all these years, it's such a great compliment. That's why I keep on playing.

"So give my regards to *Mc Beat*. They are so good to me, making me a winner in their polls. The others in the violin district are also very good musicians, but it's *always* good to be the first," Grappelli concluded with a sly laugh. As soon as the door closed, the unmistakable sound of his violin wafted down the hall. **DB**

EQUIPMENT

Stéphane Grappelli performs on either of two violins, a Guadagnini or a Montaguana, which

were both made in the late-18th or early-to-mid 19th century.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader

STEPHANE GRAPPELLI IN TOKYO—Denon 77130
PLAYS JEROME KERN—GRP GRC1032
FEELING & FINESSE—Atlantic 90140
PLAYS MUSIC OF GERSHWIN AND PORTER—Accord 139004
SHADES OF DJANGO—Verve 825955
STEPHANOVA—Concord Jazz 225

with Django Reinhardt

35-39 DJANGO REINHARDT—GNP 9019 (w/Quintet of the Hot Club of France)
PARISIAN SWING—GNP 9002
QUINTET OF THE HOT CLUB OF FRANCE—Vogue 60070
DJANGOLOGY '49—RCA/Bluebird 9988

as a co-leader

TOGETHER AT LAST—Flying Fish 421 (Vassar Clements)

HOW CAN YOU MISS?—Rushmore Jazz 3000 (Phil Woods)
OLYMPIA '88—Atlantic B2095 (Martial Solal)
ONE ON ONE—Milestone MCD 9181 (McCoy Tyner)
THE REUNION—Verve B21 868 (George Shearing)
JAZZ VIOLIN SESSION—Atlantic 1688 (Duke Ellington)
LIVE—Warner Bros. 3550 (David Grisman)
ANYTHING GOES—CBS FM4557 (Yo-Yo Ma)
TIVOLI GARDENS—Fantasy 441 (Joe Pass and Neils-Henning Ørsted Pedersen)
JEAN-LUC PONTY & STEPHANE GRAPPELLI—Inner City 1005 (Jean-Luc Ponty)
OSCAR PETERSON FEATURES STEPHANE GRAPPELLI—Prestige 24041
TWO OF A KIND—Polydor 236 502 (Svend Asmussen)
MEETS BARNEY KESSEL—Black Lion 760132 (Barney Kessel)
I REMEMBER DJANGO—Black Lion 105 (Barney Kessel)
VIOLIN SUMMIT—MPS 064 61227 (Ponty, Asmussen, Stuff Smith)

Firm Foundations

Down Beat's
1992 Hall of Fame
and Lifetime
Achievement Awards

DOWN BEAT HALL OF FAME

Readers Poll

- 1952 Louis Armstrong
- 1953 Glenn Miller
- 1954 Stan Kenton
- 1955 Charlie Parker
- 1956 Duke Ellington
- 1957 Benny Goodman
- 1958 Count Basie
- 1959 Lester Young
- 1960 Dizzy Gillespie
- 1961 Billie Holiday
- 1962 Miles Davis
- 1963 Thelouious Monk
- 1964 Eric Dolphy
- 1965 John Coltrane
- 1966 Bud Powell
- 1967 Billy Strayhorn
- 1968 Wes Montgomery
- 1969 Ornette Coleman
- 1970 Jimi Hendrix
- 1971 Charles Mingus
- 1972 Gene Krupa
- 1973 Sonny Rollins
- 1974 Buddy Rich
- 1975 Cannonball Adderley
- 1976 Woody Herman
- 1977 Paul Desmond
- 1978 Joe Venuti
- 1979 Ella Fitzgerald
- 1980 Dexter Gordon
- 1981 Art Blakey
- 1982 Art Pepper
- 1983 Stephane Grappelli
- 1984 Oscar Peterson
- 1985 Sarah Vaughan
- 1986 Stan Getz
- 1987 Lionel Hampton

- 1988 Jaco Pastorius
- 1989 Woody Shaw
- 1990 Red Rodney
- 1991 Lee Morgan
- 1992 see ballot on page 51

Critics Poll

- Coleman Hawkins
- Bix Beiderbecke
- Jelly Roll Morton
- Art Tatum
- Earl Hines
- Charlie Christian
- Bessie Smith
- Sidney Bechet/Fats Waller
- Pee Wee Russell/Jack Teagarden
- Johnny Hodges
- Roy Eldridge/Django Reinhardt
- Clifford Brown
- Fletcher Henderson
- Ben Webster
- Cecil Taylor
- King Oliver
- Benny Carter
- Rahsaan Roland Kirk
- Lennie Tristano
- Max Roach
- Bill Evans
- Fats Navarro
- Albert Ayler
- Sun Ra
- Zoot Sims
- Gil Evans
- Johnny Dodds/Thad Jones/
Teddy Wilson
- Kenny Clarke
- Chet Baker
- Mary Lou Williams
- John Carter
- James P. Johnson

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

- 1981 John Hammond
 - 1982 George Wein
 - 1983 Leonard Feather
 - 1984 Dr. Billy Taylor
 - 1985 Dr. Lawrence Berk
 - 1986 Orrin Keepnews
 - 1987 David Baker

 - 1988 John Conyers, Jr.*
 - 1989 Norman Granz
 - 1990 Rudy Van Gelder
 - 1991 Bill Cosby
 - 1992 Rich Matteson
- *Special Achievement Award

This year's inductee into Down Beat's Hall of Fame, James P. Johnson, and our Lifetime Achievement Award recipient, musician/educator Rich Matteson, both illustrate the importance of groundwork. Johnson's education as pianist included both the study of European classical techniques, an "orchestral" approach, as well as attention to the dance music of the day, namely, ragtime.

This was his foundation for a career that spanned everything from dives in Hell's Kitchen to Carnegie Hall. His musical, *Runnin' Wild*, ran for 213 performances on Broadway; his first orchestral work, *Yamekraw*, debuted at Carnegie Hall. He continued to write large-scale works and record jazz until a stroke incapacitated him in 1951. Johnson laid the foundation for generations of jazz pianists that followed him.

Matteson grew up in a musical family and earned a degree in music education. He left a performing career to teach, founding the jazz program at the University of North Florida. He built a career that has enabled thousands of students to build a firm foundation, emphasizing their love and pride for the music. We proudly honor them both.

—Dave Helland

All In Stride

JAMES P. JOHNSON

By Marcus Roberts



PIERRE—DE SYLVA

"The most important thing that I can see is that the jazz musicians of the future will have to be able to play all different kinds of jazz—in all its treatments—just like the classical musician who in one concert might range from Bach to Copland."

[James P. Johnson, *The Jazz Review*, '47]

The truth of these words lives on today in the generations of pianists who have come along since James P. Johnson—"father of stride piano," and the most recent inductee to *Down Beat's* Hall of Fame. If you listen to the solo-piano playing of a young, developing pianist like Steven Scott, or a great, seasoned veteran like McCoy Tyner, or an elder statesman like Hank Jones, one thing rings clear despite their vastly different musical personalities: they all either directly or indirectly are dealing with stride piano.

Born February 1, 1894, into a family which had a genuine appreciation for the arts, James P. Johnson is hailed for creating stride and taking it to its most provocative degree. Johnson stride evolved from three major components: his mastery of turn-of-the-century ragtime styles; his intimate knowledge of standard piano repertory written primarily by Beethoven, Chopin, and Liszt; and a strong sense of rhythm which came from his exposure to popular dances of the day. As critic Stanley Crouch points out, Johnson and his generation of pianists represent roots that go as far back in European keyboard material as the piece in D Major from Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*, and all of the formal and folk materials they heard in

concert halls and in the street. His style is one of democratic recognition, and its strength comes from the human elements it speaks of so eloquently. His is not a music for those pianists given to trifling levels of engagement. I know that from experience.

When Rob Gibson, Lincoln Center jazz director, invited me to perform the works of James P. Johnson in a retrospective tribute, I knew I had a lot of work to do. In addition to "Carolina Shout"—the signature piece that defined stride piano for an entire generation of pianists in the '20s—Gibson suggested that I prepare Johnson's "Arkansas Blues," "Keep Off The Grass," "Snowy Mornin' Blues," and "Yamekraw" for the February concert (see "Caught" May '92).

The first day that I started to tackle "Shout," depression set in like a bad storm. I only learned about eight measures of the music and could not get connected to it spiritually or physically. I had to learn all of the pieces for the Johnson concert aurally—note-for-note from tapes Gibson sent me. I went to bed thinking that if I didn't come up with a regimen of serious shedding that I was going to fall flat on my face.

Johnson's stride material requires tremendous physical power due to the intense rhythmic pulse of the left hand in combination with a strong, fast right hand. To meet the demands of his work, I designed a routine to increase strength and flexibility in my left hand. I wanted more precision and better timing jumping from one register to another in the "oom pah" style that is indigenous to stride. Playing fast is best achieved by practicing slow. I used this rule to tackle "Shout" and "Keep Off The Grass"

with the left hand first. This way, I could concentrate on gauging the distances between registers. I gradually sped up the tempo until I was comfortably executing those distances. Maintaining stability and endurance in the left hand was my most challenging problem in learning this music. What makes stride much more difficult for pianists who have had no solo experience is that the left hand must interact with the right hand thematically and harmonically, while maintaining a very powerful rhythmic pulse that will keep the essence and motion of the performance intact.

To understand the philosophy of the music, I listened to many different stride players from the 1920s and '30s and investigated Johnson's sources of inspiration and musical training. Part of the unplanned but still essential discipline of Johnson's era came about from pianists having to accompany amateurs who leaped in and out of key, meter, etc. That flexibility was an essential blessing to jazz piano. Then there is the matter of technique. In *The Jazz Review*, Johnson told Tom Davin, "The reason the New York boys became such high-class musicians was because . . . the people in New York were used to hearing good piano played in concerts and cafes. The ragtime players had to live up to that standard. They had to get orchestral effects, sound harmonies, chords, and all the techniques of European concert pianists who were playing their music all over the city."

Understanding the philosophy of stride made it possible for me to play the music with much more feeling and expression, and caused me to develop a much more authentic interpretation of the style.

The ultimate challenge was to reach a spiritual bonding with the music—to be able to integrate the essence of Johnson's style with my musical identity. Reaching into the spiritual realm of his music reminded me of my childhood in Jacksonville and the advice my mother would give me on gospel-filled Sundays in church. "Play it with feeling or don't play it at all," she'd say.

It wasn't until I began to deal with Johnson's music that I realized what a profound legacy he'd created. I could hear his influence in the music of Fats Waller, Count Basie, Duke Ellington, and Willie "The Lion" Smith. Certainly Monk and Ellington were spiritually connected to Johnson and personalized a great amount of his work. While I am still in the process of trying to do that, I feel very strongly that having had the opportunity to play the music of James P. Johnson at Lincoln Center was one of the most important engagements of my career. **DB**

Editor's Note: Marcus Roberts will play the music of James P. Johnson on an upcoming release, *If I Could Be With You*, on RCA/Novus.



Euphonium-player Rich Matteson blowing up a storm with Clark Terry

Play For One You Love

RICH MATTESON

By Dan Macdonald

A lesson learned from Louis Armstrong has been the basis of the teaching and playing philosophy of the recipient of this year's *Down Beat* Lifetime Achievement Award. Jazz educator and euphonium player Rich Matteson has spent his career passing on this lesson.

Matteson, 63, recently retired as the Koger Distinguished Professor of American Music at the University of North Florida in Jacksonville. Over his career he has been a performer, composer, arranger, author, and educator. Recovering from a bout with cancer, he plans a busy retirement that'll include performing, clinics, a book about improvisation, and composing and arranging for Columbia Pictures/Belwin.

In 1961, while with the Dukes of Dixieland, Matteson recorded *Louis And The Dukes* for Audio Fidelity. Armstrong brought the session to tears with his rendition of "A Closer Walk With Thee." "We played it a little bit, he put his trumpet down and folded his hands, and at that minute turned that place into his own cathedral," Matteson recalled. "There was nobody in that room but Louis Armstrong and God. He was looking up and talking with God. When he got done with that first take we were all crying.

"I think this is one of the times that God acted in my behalf. He gave me the moxie to ask Louis, 'How do you do this?' He looked at me and said, 'You've always got to play for someone that you love. I play for Him up there because He gave me the talent in the first place; and I play for Lucille, my wife, because I love her. If they [the audience] want to listen, that's cool. If they don't want

to listen, that's cool, too. Because I'm going to play for Him and her anyway.' He said that you always play for someone you love."

A recent student who has used that lesson is Marcus Printup, a trumpeter who has performed with Wynton Marsalis and Marcus Roberts. "I wasn't really nervous when playing with Wynton, because I pictured my parents in the audience, and I played for them. That's something Rich told me that has always stuck in my head."

Matteson, a Minnesota native, came from a musical family. At 10, he began playing euphonium and was soon performing in his father's band. As a child he also studied classical piano. He attended Augustana College in Rock Island, Ill., for a year with thoughts of becoming a minister, but his love of music led him elsewhere.

Upon his discharge from the Army in 1952 he enrolled at the University of Iowa and earned a bachelor's degree in music education. He was a member of the Hal Weise Band, the Bob Scobey Band, and the Dukes of Dixieland. He began his teaching career while a clinician for Getzen, replacing Doc Severinsen. During this time he became acquainted with the faculty at the University of North Texas and began teaching its improvisation classes in 1973. Matteson came to Jacksonville to create its jazz program at the urging of music patron Ira Koger. With a million-dollar endowment, Matteson began his program in 1986.

Matteson's love of jazz and for people go hand in hand. Keyboardist Lyle Mays met Matteson as a boy during a summer-music camp. While a teen, Mays spent a week in Matteson's home studying improvisation. He

later attended North Texas to continue under Matteson's tutelage. "I wouldn't be playing jazz if it weren't for Rich Matteson," Mays says. "He's so charismatic, and his enthusiasm is so infectious. Then couple that with all of his knowledge of theory. He provides information with good vibes." Printup agreed, saying, "Rich is a supernatural figure. Just walking down the hall and hearing Rich's loud, laughing voice gave everyone the incentive to practice."

But Matteson is also a taskmaster. Bunky Green, past president of the International Association of Jazz Educators and the current head of the UNF jazz program, said for Matteson, good was never good enough. "A 'C' is really not passing, he told me recently. He'd make his students take a course again if they got a 'C'. To Rich, 'C' is average, and average people do not make it in this highly skilled job market. Average will not get it."

Throughout his long career, Matteson has joked that he is the best jazz euphonium player in the world, because he is the only one. But those who have shared the stage won't accept that false modesty.

"The vibe with Rich on stage is always 'Isn't jazz great?' 'Isn't jazz fun?' Jazz improvisation is about freedom, and it seems like he has never lost sight of that," Mays says.

Matteson spoke of that freedom as the reason he has made jazz his life. "It's musical freedom of speech. It stands for America, the fact that out of all of the sadness and unhappiness that the blacks went through they still found joy in the music they made. It was their way of expressing free speech. For me, it's very basic to America's liberties." **DB**

Key

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



Stanley Turrentine

MORE THAN A MOOD—MusicMasters 01612-65079-2: THOMASVILLE; THEY CAN'T TAKE THAT AWAY FROM ME; IN A SENTIMENTAL MOOD; EASY WALKER; TRISTE; PIECES OF DREAMS; SPIRITS UP ABOVE; MORE THAN A MOOD. (55:09)

Personnel: Turrentine, tenor saxophone; Cedar Walton, piano; Ron Carter, bass; Billy Higgins, drums; Freddie Hubbard, trumpet (cut 1), flugelhorn (7).

★★★★★

More Than A Mood has the effect of a big, cheerful pinch, delivered just in time to wake up those who were dozing off from all the copycat jazz that's around these days. These guys don't need to borrow nostalgia; they know whereof they play. Their collective bop experience pays off in smart, fresh new takes on mainstream material. After a three-year gap in recording, Stanley Turrentine's back with a winner. His playing on *More* swings with the kind of sophistication it takes years to develop and with none of the mannerisms that sometimes accrue along the way. Every note counts.

Turrentine gets an unusually sweet, honed sound for a tenor player. When he wants it, he also gets power and edge, but he never makes a big deal out of how hard he's working. One of the best showcases for Turrentine is George and Ira Gershwin's "They Can't Take That Away From Me." Here, his half-sultry, half-amused approach exudes suave confidence. On "In A Sentimental Mood" he stretches out for a long, comfortable walk around the changes, not accepting the tune at its well-known face value but really exploring it.

The crisp, economical pianism of Cedar Walton, the discreet but always firmly guiding bass of Ron Carter, and the trim press rolls and delicate brushwork of Billy Higgins highlight Turrentine's considerable talents. Freddie Hub-

bard's presence is limited to two cuts, but his flugelhorn makes "Spirits Up Above" soar.

—Elaine Guregian



Dr. John

GOIN' BACK TO NEW ORLEANS—Warner Bros. 26940: LITANIE DES SAINTS; CARELESS LOVE; MY INDIAN RED; MILNEBURG JOYS; I THOUGHT I HEARD BUDDY BOLDEN SAY; BASIN STREET BLUES; DIDN'T HE RAMBLE; DO YOU CALL THAT A BUDDY?; HOW COME MY DOG DIDN'T BARK; GOOD NIGHT IRENE; FESS UP; SINCE I FELL FOR YOU; I'LL BE GLAD WHEN YOU'RE DEAD, YOU RASCAL YOU; CABBAGE HEAD; GOIN' HOME TOMORROW; BLUE MONDAY; SCALD DOG MEDLEY/I CAN'T GO ON; GOIN' BACK TO NEW ORLEANS.

Personnel: Dr. John, lead vocals, piano, organ, electric piano, guitar; Danny Barker, banjo (cuts 3,4,7,14,18), guitar & vocal (5); the Neville Brothers, vocals (1,2,8,18); Pete Fountain, clarinet (6,18); Charles Neville (18), Herb Hardesty (16,17), Eric Traub (2,4,7,8,15-18), Amadee Castenell (3,6,9-13), Frederick Kemp (3,6,9,10,12,13), tenor sax; Alvin "Red" Tyler (2,4,7,8,15-18), Roger Lewis (6,9,10,12), baritone sax; Al Hirt (18), Jamil Sharif (2,3,5,7,8,15,18), Charlie Miller (3,6,9,10,12,13), Umar Sharif (3,6,9,10,12,13), trumpet; Bruce Hammond, trombone (3,4,6-10,12,13); Kirk Joseph, tuba (3,4,7,14); Freddy Staehle, drums; David Barard (8,10,15-18), Chris Severin (1-4,6,7,9,12-14), bass; Tommy Moran, guitars; Alfred "Uganda" Roberts, Chief "Smiley" Ricks, Cyril Neville, Charles Neville, percussion; Shirley Goodman (10), Stephanie Whitfield (1,10), Connie Fitch (1,10), Tara Janelle (10), Chuck Carbo (10), background vocals; unidentified strings (1).

★★★★★

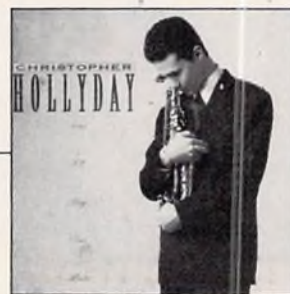
Oddly enough, the Crescent City roots doctor has never recorded an album on native ground until now. More than just a homecoming, *Goin' Back To New Orleans* is the culmination of Mac Rebennack's career to date, from teen prodigy to elder statesman. No stranger to star-studded casts, he's recruited a mind-boggling Big Easy ensemble, from the Neville Brothers to Pete Fountain, Al Hirt, and banjo legend Danny Barker. If his recent jazz and pop excursions suggested a grit-and-gris-gris Harry Connick, this one evokes Wynton, with high-stepping horn charts and a retro repertoire that goes back to Buddy Bolden and beyond.

The opening "Litanie Des Saints" is a stunning update on Louis Moreau Gottschalk's classical adaptation of antebellum Congo Square rhythms, with Dr. John and Cyrille Neville trading multilingual Afro-Caribbean chants over Wardell Quezergue's sleek string arrangement. On Jelly Roll Morton's "I Thought I Heard Buddy Bolden Say" Rebennack swaps nostalgic verses with Barker, while on "Indian

Red" he salutes the various tribes of Mardi Gras "indians" over stomping brass and percussion.

As usual, Dr. John's exaggerated drawl is less effective than his masterly piano, but on the obscure oldie, "Do You Call That A Buddy?," he summons up some of Louis Armstrong's gravely wit. The remaining material spans a century's worth of jazz, blues, and r&b. But instrumental polish can't rub the mold from chestnuts like "Didn't He Ramble" or "Good Night Irene"; and for all the celebrity cameos, the title track still sounds routine.

—Larry Birnbaum



Christopher Hollyday

AND I'LL SING ONCE MORE—RCA/Novus 63133-2: HEROES; KATE THE ROOMMATE; THE SOUND OF MUSIC; STORM; BEYOND THE BARREN LANDS; CHANT; NEFERTITI; LET THE MOON STAND STILL; THE VERY THOUGHT OF YOU. (61:22)

Personnel: Hollyday, alto sax; Kenny Werner, piano, arranger; Ron Savage, drums; Scott Colley, bass; Earl Gardner, Joe Mosello, trumpet, flugelhorn; John Clark, french horn; John Mosca, Ed Neumeister, trombone; Douglas Purviance, bass trombone; Scott Robinson, tenor sax, baritone sax, flute, alto flute, clarinet, bass clarinet; Mark Feldman, violin; Eric Charry, tamboura; Jamey Haddad, talking drum, caxixi, Indian bells, frame drum.

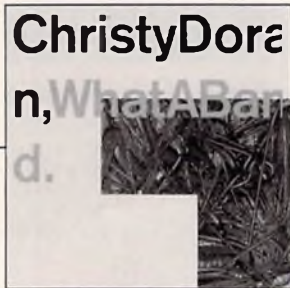
★★★★★ 1/2

This album separates Christopher Hollyday from the scores of other conservatory-trained kids who can get around on their instruments in impressive fashion, and much of the credit must go to arranger/composer Kenny Werner. Shedding the small-group format, he wades into deeper waters than his peers by dealing with the plush surroundings of a 15-piece band. Werner's "Heroes" evokes the spirit of the classic Gil Evans-Miles Davis collaborations, relying on the warmer tones of low-brass sounds to subtly underscore Hollyday's alto. His arrangement of "The Sound Of Music," a tune that could easily slip into the saccharine zone, recalls the sparse mystique of Miles' "Flamenco Sketches," while his fresh take on Ray Noble's schmaltzy ballad, "The Very Thought Of You," with muted-brass accompaniment, is the final word in lush.

Hollyday shows a sense of humor on his whimsical march, "Kate The Roommate," and he goes for the unbridled burn on "Storm," a jarring staccato original with a flowing Werner piano solo in the middle section. And his dirge-like suite, "Beyond The Barren Lands," is exotic and daring compared to the same ol' same ol'

being served up by his neo-bop contemporaries. On Werner's Eastern-sounding "Chant," the alto player joins in tandem with renegade violinist Mark Feldman, a daring choice in itself, to weave hypnotic unison lines around talking drum and tamboura. And on a velvety smooth arrangement of Wayne Shorter's "Nefertiti," the two engage in some similarly-pitched call-and-response with Feldman's rich, quavering violin buoying up Hollyday's reedy-sounding lines. This is an odd couple that works very well together. For sheer acrobatic burn, there's "Let The Moon Stand," an appeasement to speed freaks. But this ain't just another kid who can move his digits uncommonly fast. This one's got ideas to support those blazing chops.

—Bill Milkowski



Christy Doran

WHAT A BAND—hat ART CD 6105: *SOLO-MUTATIONS; SHE WALKED THROUGH THE FAIR; SLAP; SWITCHES, NO CUTS; SOMETIME YOU WIN, SOMETIME . . . ; BIG HEART; IN THE CORNER OF THE EYE; ANOTHER COLLAGE; FOR MARIANNE; CHORD; FOLLOWING QUASAR.* (56:20)

Personnel: Doran, guitar, delay devices.

★★★★

PHOENIX—hat ART CD 6074: *BEYOND WORDS; PHOENIX; SEVEN SHADOWS; CELTIC BALLAD; LOU YURI; THE WARM UP; FLYING CARPET; SPIRALE; CISSE; RODS AND CONES; SONG FOR SONNY.* (67:40)

Personnel: Doran, guitars, delay devices; Ray Anderson, trombone (2,6,10); Marty Ehrlich, clarinet (1), tenor sax (4,7), alto sax (9); Urs Leimgruber, soprano sax (8); Hank Roberts, cello (3,5,11).

★★★★ 1/2

Doran/Thomas/Previte/Helias

CORPORATE ART—JMT 849 155: *BLOOD SUGAR 360°; 21; MUTATIONS; SKIN; CHIAROSCURO; HEITEREGELASSENHEIT; BASS MINOTAUR; THE SAME BUT DIFFERENT; THEME FOR W.* (60:40)

Personnel: Doran, guitar; Gary Thomas, tenor sax, flute; Bobby Previte, drums; Mark Helias, electric bass.

★★★★ 1/2

Charter member of the '70s electric jazz group OM, Christy Doran is a 43-year-old Irish guitarist based in Lucerne, Switzerland. And boy, has he been busy lately: a CD of solos, a CD of duos, and . . . what, a band? Well, not exactly. *Corporate Art* was a producer's group and a concept that took some serious work to get incorporated, given four such different players. It's a rocky-funky thing, of course, with bright contributions from all involved (writing and

playing), and in the end it works pretty well. Thomas has a hard-edged, bluesy tone; he dead- on nails fuzoid heads like Doran's "The Same But Different." Previte and Helias jet-propel the set. Previte's ceaseless energy and flamboyant, sometimes over-showy fills sparking what could otherwise have been lifeless compositions. In places the group's seams show, as on Thomas' dreamy flute vehicle "Chiaroscuro" and Doran's "Mutations," where something perpetually seems on the verge of happening. The CD's sweet spot, though,

comes courtesy of Doran as he kicks out the jamzz and goes completely over the top at the end of "Heitergelassenheit."

Duet disc *Phoenix* is too varied and wide-ranging an experience to paraphrase; even a single cut, like the beautiful "Seven Shadows" with Hank Roberts, would require an extensive travelog. What can be said is that Doran is a first-class improviser with excellent taste in partners. He is a bold player, but he's also not shy about minute sounds—scraping and buzzing are often combined with mercurial

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lines and sonorous washes. His compositions (which make up the bulk of these tête-à-têtes) are minimal, and the focus here is clearly on dialogical improvising—the creation of a common space between two players. Outest and perhaps most interesting, is the 15-minute interaction with Swiss soprano saxophonist (and ex-OM partner) Urs Leimgruber. Of particular note as well are the duets with Ray Anderson; nice to hear his bodacious 'bone in this less straightforward context.


On Doran's solo excursion we encounter the dreaded loops & layers syndrome—digital delay is now the flavor of the weak. He recognizes that repetition doesn't necessarily make something musical, that there has to be some logic to the loopiness. In some cases he uses the delay devices (the "band") to generate ostinato beds, as on "Switches, No Cuts." Elsewhere, he intertwines lines and chords, creating a bubbling polyphonic stew on "Solomutations." His Hendrixian tendencies

emerge on the traditional Irish "She Walked ...," which he treats to a lovey, distortion-supersaturated reading. In spots, Doran's guitar work moves off too far into the ether for me—like a steel-stringed Egberto Gismonti. Mainly, though, I find him a very stimulating string-along, for real.
—John Corbett



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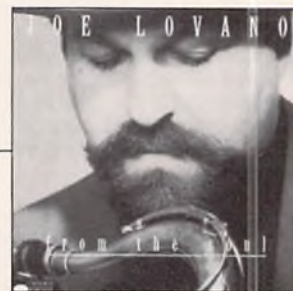
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Joe Lovano

FROM THE SOUL—Blue Note B4-98636: *EVOLUTION; PORTRAIT OF JENNY; LINES AND SPACES; BODY AND SOUL; MODERN MAN; FORT WORTH; CENTRAL PARK WEST; WORK; LEFT BEHIND; HIS DREAMS.*

Personnel: Lovano, tenor sax; Michel Petrucciani, piano; Dave Holland, bass; Ed Blackwell, drums.

★★★★½

Motian/Lovano/Frisell

MOTIAN IN TOKYO—JMT 849 154-2: *FROM TIME TO TIME; SHAKALAKA; KATHELIN GRAY; THE HOAX; MUMBO JUMBO; BIRDSONG; MODE VI; WOMEN FROM PADUA; IT IS; BIRDSONG II. (54:54)*

Personnel: Paul Motian, drums; Joe Lovano, tenor sax; Bill Frisell, guitar.

★★★★

Having recently stepped into the limelight after a two-decade apprenticeship, the 39-year-old tenor man is living proof that experience is the best teacher. Like his contemporary David Murray, Lovano is a well-rounded postbopper for whom free jazz is simply a logical outgrowth of tradition; but he's more introverted and eclectic, smoothly melding genres from swing to fusion. Two new releases showcase different aspects of his style: his second Blue Note solo date is cast in an Ornette-ish mold, while a live trio set with Paul Motian recalls Miles' early electric days.

From The Soul features the illustrious rhythm section of Holland, Petrucciani, and Blackwell, with the drummer setting a supple, capering pace. Lovano himself is more somber, blunting Ornette and Dewey Redman's radical edge with suave phrasing and a velvety Ben Webster timbre. The material is divided between sleek abstractions like "Evolution" or "Modern" and pensive ballads like "Portrait Of Jenny" and "Body And Soul," which Lovano personalizes in a spirit of reverential awe. Holland's cunning throb is everywhere, while Petrucciani plays sparsely, copping deft licks from a modernist grab bag. But it's Blackwell who tethers the group to earth and jells what might have been a lighter-than-air confab into a heavyweight

dialog.

Motian has maintained his bass-less trio for 10 years, and his splashy drumming and spacy compositions dominate *Molian In Tokyo*. Lovano and Bill Frisell project individual auras—the saxist wistful and moody, the guitarist caustic and skittish—merging into a sound unmistakably like Joe Zawinul's "In A Silent Way." Lovano leans heavily on the Coleman-Redman connection, at the same time he's softer and more lyrical—though he manages to blow a post-Coltrane firestorm over Motian's high-energy clatter on "Mumbo Jumbo." The music is light-years ahead of most contemporary fusion, but like much of what passes for avant garde today, it's still 20 years behind the times.

—Larry Birnbaum



Hugh Masekela

BEATIN' AROUND DE BUSH—Novus 63136-2: *STEPPIN' OUT*; *NGENA-NGENA (INSTRUMENTAL)*; *NGENA (A CAPPELLA)*; *BATSUMI*; *ROCK WITH ME*; *POLINA*; *LANGUTA*; *SEKUNJALO*; *U-MAMA*; *BEATIN' AROUND DE BUSH*. (53:36)

Personnel: Masekela, flugelhorn, vocals, keyboards; Todd Jasmin (cuts 1,5), Richard Cummings (9), Gboyaga Adelaja (10), keyboards; Tony Cedras, keyboards, accordion, guitar, background vocals (2,4,6,7,8,10); Lawrence Matshiza (1,5), George Doering (9), Stanley Todd (10), guitar; Bakithi Khumalo, bass, background vocals (1-9); Yaw Opoku, bass (10); Richard Druz (1,5,10), Damon Duewhite (2,6,8), Gene Jackson (9), Frankie Todd (10), Francis Fuster (2,8,10), percussion; Remi Kabaka, talking drums (8,9); Morris Goldberg, alto sax, whistle (1,2,4,6,7,8); Teco Cardoso, tenor sax (5); Clydene Jackson Edwards (1,5), Fred White (1,5), Thandi Bhengu (4,7), Lebohang Morake (4,7), Ronald Kunene (4,7), Ambition Sandqnela (4,7), Cussie Kunene (4,7), Guy Spells (9,10), Pauline Farabee (9,10), Jynniifer Quick (9,10), Sandy Simmons (9), background vocals.

★ ★ ★

It's tempting to dismiss mellow flugelhorn player Hugh Masekela's latest effort based on what comes early in the collection. It opens with a pretty tame, straight, melodic read of Joe Jackson's '80s chartbuster "Steppin' Out," then drifts into a breezy, predictable "Grazin' In The Grass"-like number that could well be destined for lots of easy-listening airplay. Not until Masekela's short, soulful multi-tracked a cappella interlude does this album begin to get interesting. However, while the following piece, "Batsumi," is a lovely melody with haunting flugelhorn and whistle lines, Masekela again displays his penchant for the pop mainstream, disrupting the momentum by uninvitably at-

tempting a jazz-fusion experiment with that old AOR standard, "Rock With Me."

The best moments on *Beatin' Aroun De Bush* come when the South African-born Masekela breathes the rhythms and sensibilities of the African continent into his music. The first vital signs of life come in his wonderfully exotic composition, "Languta," with its percolating rhythms, snapped bass lines, and accordion spicings supporting Masekela's emotive vocals and passionate flugelhorn blowing. "Sekun-

jalo" is a joyful jaunt through more "Grazin'" landscapes, but this time talking-drum player Remi Kabaka is unleashed to demonstratively converse. Even the funky dance-floor pop song, "U-Mama," works thanks to its percussive foundation. Then there's the title tune, a compelling anthem of freedom, that Masekela sings with an urgency and plays eloquent flugelhorn. The song makes for a strong ending to an album that almost beat around the bush too long to ever get on track. —Dan Ouellette

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Rockin' Swingers

by John Litweiler

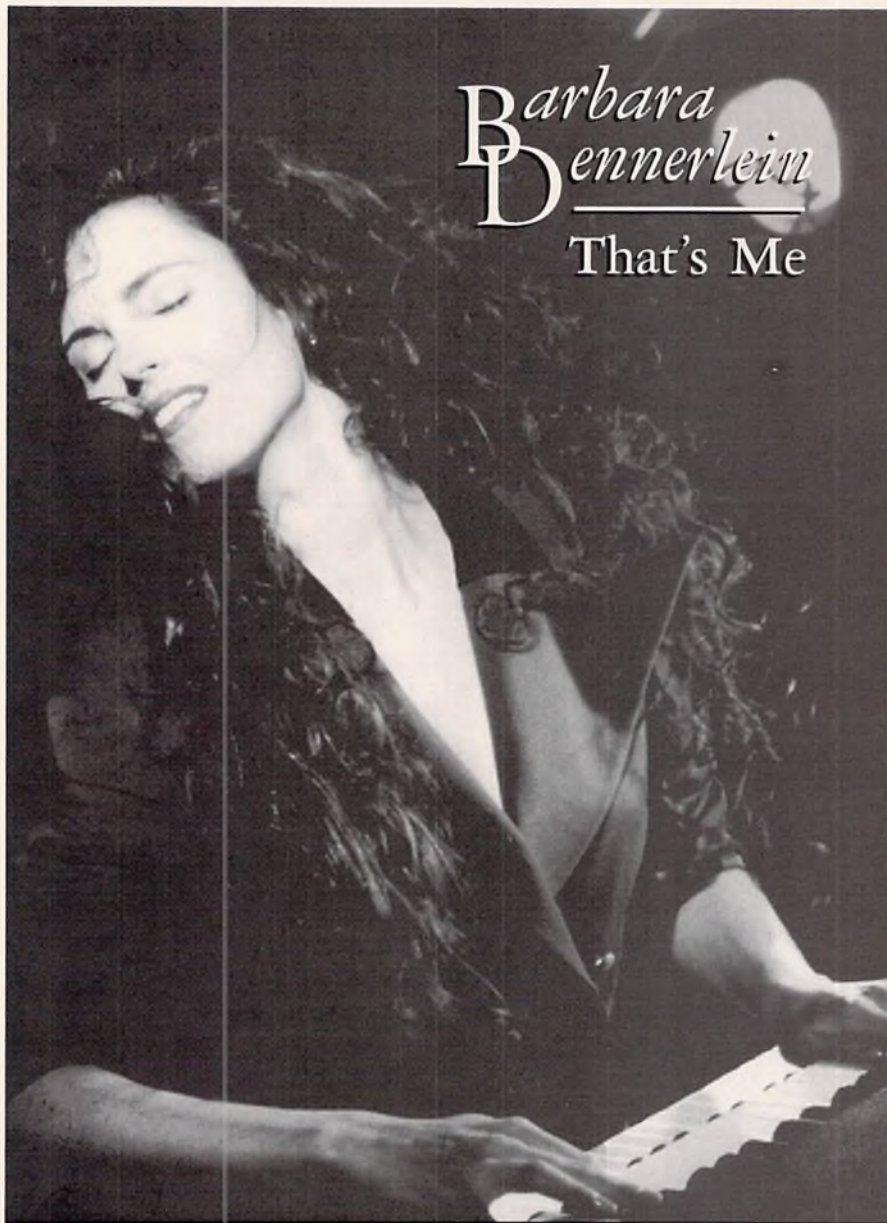
Snowy Morning Blues (Decca GRD-604; 56:52: ★★★★★½) begins with the very great pianist, composer, and songwriter **James P. Johnson** in his prime, in 1930: mixing rhythmic urgency, restless reharmonizing, lacy decoration, and fresh melodies. Some of the intensity, though not the interpretive subtlety, is gone by the 1944 dates that make up the bulk of this disc: by then Johnson had

suffered a stroke, and the discreet drumming of Eddie Daugherty proves helpful. Eight 1944 tracks are Johnson originals, including remakes of earlier hits; the other eight are songs by his prize student, Fats Waller, and prove irresistibly provocative. Here is stride piano with unflinching rocking swing.

Benny Goodman and **Jack Teagarden** are young sidemen on the 1929-'34 tracks of *B.G. And Big Tea In NYC* (Decca GRD-609; 62:02: ★★★★★½). They meet their matches in a Joe Venuti-Eddie Lang date: fiddler Venuti equals the clarinetist's blitheness, Lang's guitar de-



James P. Johnson: a fountain of invention



You'd be hard-pressed to find a more colorful woman in jazz music today. **Barbara Dennerlein** and her expressive Hammond B3 organ present a vibrant and spontaneous set of originals, accented by incredible soloing and her electrifying ensemble featuring **Ray Anderson**, **Dennis Chambers**, **Bob Berg**, and **Mitch Watkins**. *Prepare to be blown-away!*

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BLUEMOON

livers swinging drive, Charlie Teagarden's airy trumpet lifts the entire band, and Jack Teagarden offers priceless slurry vocals and elaborate trombone lines. As for the other groupings, bandleader Red Nichols proves an unwilling trumpet soloist on the Five Pennies tracks; cornetist Bix Beiderbecke, near the end of his rope, is an inadequate soloist with the Hotsy Totsy Gang; and an Adrian Rollini session is much too cluttered. Despite these, Goodman's New Orleans-derived phrases and instincts for contrast and Teagarden's bold melodies, growing in detail from session to session, make for a great CD.

Woody Herman's early "Band That Plays The Blues," beginning in 1937, plays most of the pieces on *Blues On Parade* (Decca GRD-606; 59:27: ★★★★★½) in fast jitterbug tempos or slow atmospheric settings with muted brass. Herman's own eclectic clarinet is, happily, heard often, and his breezy vocals emphasize the band's essentially light intentions. By 1941, and "Everything Happens To Me," perfect for his singing style, a more modern spirit enters; it takes over by the final track, Dizzy Gillespie's near-bop arrangement of "Down Under." By now Herman is on the threshold of his glory years with the First Herd.

In 1942-'46, **Charlie Barnet** is more advanced, judging from the tight playing and ingenious arrangements of *Drop Me Off In Harlem* (Decca GRD-612; 58:51: ★★★★★). Barnet's own sax solos, usually on alto, are either in clipped jump-band phrases or else in a junior Johnny Hodges style; there is also plenty of stratospheric trumpet by Al Kilian and Peanuts Holland. Among the beauties: "The Moose," Ralph Burns's subtle miniature concerto for dazzling pianist Dodo Marmarosa; the trumpet section, in unison, playing Louis Armstrong's famous intro to "West End Blues"; the hit "Skyliner." This band is substantial in its own way.

Roy Eldridge was a complex trumpet artist, and it's no shame that *After You've Gone* (Decca GRD-605; 62:25: ★★★★★½) includes several failed attempts to recapture the glory of his 1941 epic/tragic ballad, "Rocking Chair" (for Columbia). The other dominant mood here is the hot, screaming, high-note Eldridge. Most satisfying are the less forced, more modest works, usually at medium tempos, displaying the warmth and rasp of his sound. These are mostly big-band works from 1943-'46; brief, vivid moments by the likes of tenorist Tom Archia and altoist Porter Kilbert show bop rearing its lovely head even in this late-swing setting.

DB

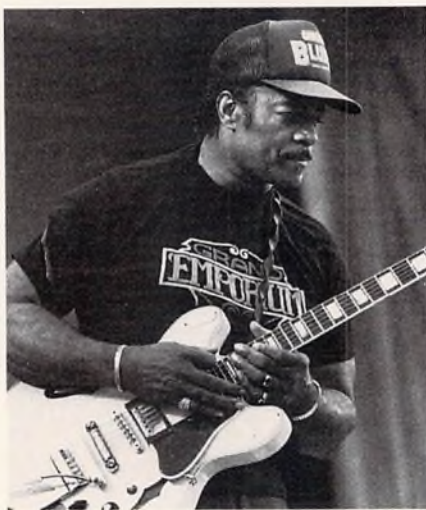
Bloody But Unbowed

by David Whiteis

Once upon a time, blues enthusiasts were so enamored of the image of grizzled veterans being rediscovered after years of obscurity that young blues musicians and their contemporary sounds were getting overlooked. These days the youngsters have come into such full-bloom that their elders are in danger of slipping back into obscurity. New releases—and in one case, a timely re-release—of material by some of our most respected blues longtimers should help rectify this condition.

I must be getting old—**Johnny Winter** is now among those "grizzled veterans" vying with young upstarts for recognition! What's most impressive about *Let Me In* (Pointblank/Charisma 91744-2; 49:52; ★★★★★) is the variety of emotional and musical textures Winter can summon within the constraints of his primarily balls-out style. Dr. John is on hand to contribute some lovely pianistics ("Life Is Hard") and hard-bitten hipster wit (the lyrics of "You Lie Too Much"). The Mad Albino is still at the top of his game, and the good Doctor's mojo is as potent as ever.

Chicago Blues Stars (Arhoolie 1043; 48:26; ★★★) is a re-release of slidemaster **Johnny Littlejohn's** Arhoolie LP of the same title from 1969. In general, the disc doesn't measure up



Jimmy Dawkins: fractured ferocity

to its promise—harsh, declamatory intros segue into medium-intensity grooves, with lugubrious horns and a non-propulsive rhythm section that doesn't do Littlejohn's fiery fretwork justice. But it's still an enjoyable blast of nonsense, street-level Chicago grit.

Stormy Monday Band & Louisiana Red Meet Carey Bell (Blues Beacon 1010-2; 50:32; ★★★½) finds one of the blues' legendary free spirits (guitarist Red) going head-to-head with

a modern harmonica master (Bell). The result is sometimes disjointed but always entertaining. Red's slide is tubular and intense; he runs through Delta traditionalism, electric Chicago-style intensity, and brawny, horn-drenched roadhouse shuffles with equal aplomb, taking time off for quirky stylistic jaunts like "Ashima," a world-beat blues paean to third world cuisine. Bell is witty, melodic, and tender while never losing his raucous Chicago exuberance. The Stormy Monday Band, however, tends too much toward the frenetic, especially in Gromus Gromotka's fire-spitting solos, and several cuts go on for too long.

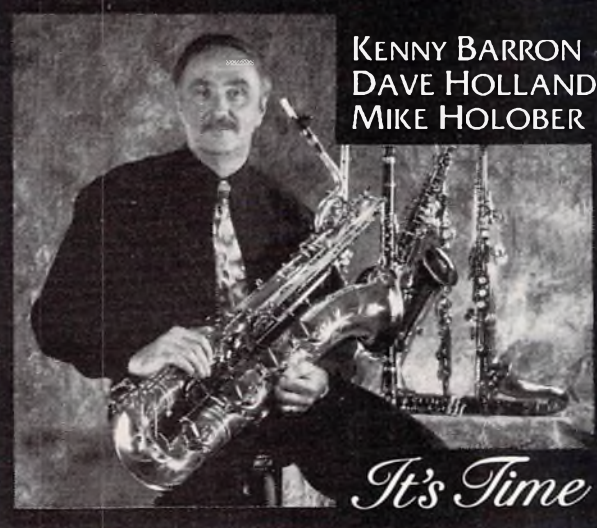
Jimmy "Fast Fingers" Dawkins is a long-time Chicago stalwart who hasn't always lived up to his reputation, or his promise. *Kant Sheek Dees Bluze* (Earwig 4920; 70:38; ★★★★★), though, is a roaring cauldron of blues energy, infused with Dawkins' trademark intensity and imaginative lyrics. Guest vocalist Nora Jean Wallace comports herself admirably on "My Man Loves Me," while Dawkins' guitar slithers around with a fractured, metallic ferocity, spitting desperation and passion all over the place, the Robert Johnson/Elmore James-influenced "I Ain't Got It" being especially impressive.

Tell My Story Movin' (Earwig 4919; 61:38; ★★½) is the first U.S. recording in years by **Louis Myers**, the legendary guitarist who played behind Little Walter in the Aces. Unfortunately, too many songs again stretch out too long, and Myers' guitar is featured on only one tune ("Blue And Lonesome"). Myers has a reputation as a

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DOWNBEAT Poll Winners- Nick Brignola, Kenny Barron, Dave Holland

fine harmonica player as well, but his harp tone here is uncharacteristically thin, his wind seems weak, and his overall energy level flags. Anything by an artist of Myers' stature is worth checking out, but only occasionally (as on the title tune) does the faded Myers genius shine through.

Finally, *Blues 'N' Bones* (Mapleshade 512695; 49:23; ★★½) is an intimate portrait of Archie Edwards, one of the few living bluesmen who specialize in the fleet Piedmont fingerpicking acoustic style. He's accom-

panied here by Richard "Mr. Bones" Thomas and harpist Mark Wenner. Edwards isn't a world-beating technician but there's a delightful, easygoing intimacy here. Thomas is a master at his ancient percussion instrument, bringing a surprising variety of textures and timbres to the bones through hand placement and creative use of the microphone. Wenner's harp is sweet-toned, never intruding, as it weaves eloquently around the guitar lines. "My Old Schoolmates," a sentimental visit to youthful haunts, is particularly satisfying. **DB**

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THE TREE—Soul Note 121195: *ROOTS*—TAKE I; *TRUNK*—TAKE I; *LIMBS*—TAKE I; *BRANCHES*—TAKE I; *TWIGS*—TAKE I; *LEAVES*—TAKE I; *LEAVES*—TAKE II; *TWIGS*—TAKE II; *BRANCHES*—TAKE II; *LIMBS*—TAKE II; *TRUNK*—TAKE II; *ROOTS*—TAKE II. (50:20 minutes)

Personnel: Liebman, soprano sax.

★ ★ ★ ½

CLASSIC BALLADS—Candid CCD79512: *OUT OF NOWHERE*; *IF I SHOULD LOSE YOU*; *DANCING IN THE DARK*; *SKYLARK*; *ANGEL EYES*; *STELLA BY STARLIGHT*; *MY FUNNY VALENTINE*; *ON GREEN DOLPHIN STREET*. (56:00)

Personnel: Liebman, soprano sax; Vic Juris, electric and acoustic guitars; Steve Gilmore, bass.

★ ★

On both of these outings Liebman is at a distance from his earlier Trane-gaming, and more interesting for it. On the whole, the ballad disc is a disappointment, though. Some of the selections (well-chosen by Liebman's mother-in-law) are smartly arranged and feature kicked-back bass and soprano work—Gilmore takes a particularly engrossing solo on "If I Should Lose You" and Liebman playfully circumvents "My Funny Valentine" (the best cut, without guitar). Unfortunately, most of their readings are fuzzed-up by Juris' pastoral, gauzy guitar which lends the whole affair a soft-focus haze. On electric guitar, he sounds like a humorless Frisell; acoustically, he's tediously uniform—whether arpeggiating or strumming, no subtle phraseology found here.

Hard to imagine that *The Tree* was made by the same Dave Liebman. In fact, it is the best Liebman record I've heard, a strong set of solo free improvisations on loosely pre-determined material relating to a (very loose) arborescent theme. Each piece is announced unceremoniously by Liebman, the entire suite played forward, then back. Following his woody concept, I find the juiciest bits those furthest "out on a limb," namely towards the middle of the disc. The two takes of harsh, multiphonic "Leaves" are great, and both "Twigs" are fine, static studies in breath and trill, riding close to the line of intonation and occasionally dropping out into the toneless zone. Liebman owes little to the two solo soprano masters, Steve Lacy and Evan Parker, nor does he share much with the younger generation of practitioners like Roberto Ottaviano, John Butcher, and Hans Koch. His tone is dry and thin, not especially resonant, and the scalar pieces at either end of the disc seem somewhat aimless. Generally, though, *The Tree* is an ambitious and exciting work; not a redwood, perhaps, but a good, sturdy oak.

—John Corbett



Grateful Dead

TWO FROM THE VAULT—Grateful Dead GDCD 40162: *GOOD MORNING LITTLE SCHOOLGIRL*; *DARK STAR*; *SAINT STEPHEN*; *THE ELEVEN*; *DEATH DON'T HAVE NO MERCY*; *THE OTHER ONE*; *NEW POTATO CABOOSE*; *TURN ON YOUR LOVELIGHT*; *MORNING DEW*. (54:09/54:22)

Personnel: Jerry Garcia, lead guitar, vocals; Phil Lesh, bass guitar, vocals; Ron "Pigpen" McKernan, vocals, keyboards, harmonica; Bob Weir, guitar, vocals; Bill Kreutzmann, Mickey Hart, percussion.

★★★★★

The Grateful Dead have skillfully dusted off a couple of vintage sets recorded in Los Angeles from 1968 in this two-disc program. The sound is clean, crisp, and well-mixed. This release serves, to some extent, as a tribute to the late, great Ron "Pigpen" McKernan, the Dead's sorely missed r&b vocalist. Pigpen, although technically not an accomplished blues singer, was a lovable bad boy with a gritty voice and a ton of attitude. He was *the* sexual voice in an otherwise fairly cerebral band, the Dead relying on him mightily to win audiences over.

Pig warms up here with a sly vocal on Sonny Boy Williamson's "Good Morning Little Schoolgirl," then absolutely scorches on Bobby Blue Bland's "Turn On Your Lovelight," a 17-minute epic that stands as a cornerstone of San Francisco rock. Clearly, Pigpen steals the show.

The "Dark Star"/"Saint Stephen"/"The Eleven"/"Death Don't Have No Mercy" medley is well-rendered, although obviously in an earlier stage of development than the transcendent 1969 version that appears on the legendary *Live/Dead*. In particular, this "Dark Star" is oddly fast and almost perfunctory, too much like the quickie studio version, not yet having achieved its subsequent "reach for the cosmos" status. Disc Two opens with "The Other One"/"New Potato Caboose" practically glowing in the dark, highlighting the brilliant instrumental interplay that has always been the Dead's forte. Garcia, Weir, and Lesh's singing is often cracked or weak. (Deadheads forgive this—nonbelievers may not be quite so benevolent.) The CD ends, appropriately, with a true '60s moment: At the peak of "Morning Dew," a passionate, apocalyptic song of warning, the cops pull the plug on the band, ostensibly for running overtime, and the Dead quickly apologize to the audience and are forced to leave the stage.

What a long, strange trip it's been from those days. But when you listen to this recording, it doesn't seem so far away. You just might remember to turn on your lovelight, and, of course, leave it on.
—Bob Winters

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RECORD & CD REVIEWS

Miles' Decade, Part 1

by John Ephland

The decade of the '60s was clearly Miles Davis' most inventive, not to mention controversial. The trend-setting trumpeter started things off playing post-cool bop with holdovers from his acclaimed late-'50s band (John Coltrane among them), later mixing it up with a revolving cast of characters—everyone from Buddy Montgomery and Sonny Stitt to Gary Peacock and Sam Rivers. Collaborations with Gil Evans continued, offering up, among others, the contentious, brief yet lovely bossa nova project *Quiet Nights*. Davis' repertoire (standards mixed with dated originals) changed very little until a new quintet was formed and recording in the studio. To be exact, it was January 1965, and the record was *E.S.P.*, a landmark album of all-new material. Herbie Hancock, Ron Carter, and Tony Williams (all having joined Davis in '63) saw the problematic saxophone chair suddenly filled by ex-Jazz Messenger/composer extraordinaire Wayne Shorter—who, by the way, had already recorded for Davis in '62.

But before we get on to *E.S.P.* and the other recent reissues that followed, there's still this business of the standards rep, with an occasional original chestnut thrown in for good measure. Behold *Seven Steps To Heaven* and *The Complete Concert: 1964—My Funny Valentine + Four & More*, albums that showcased a transitional Miles Davis. In the case of 1963's *Seven Steps To Heaven* (Columbia/Legacy CK 48827; 46:21; ★★★½), Davis recorded half of this heavily edited album in Hollywood, half in New York. Featured are pianist/composer Victor Feldman and drummer Frank Butler (Hollywood), tenor saxist George Coleman, and the rhythm section of Hancock, Carter, and Williams for the first time (N.Y.). Carter and Coleman were the only holdovers for both sessions. The material is played in a style reminiscent of *Someday My Prince Will Come* ('61): smooth, polished, yet without Coltrane's heat. Feldman's lush chordal voicings (e.g., "I Fall In Love Too Easily") contrast with Hancock's bluesier, funkier swing (Davis and Feldman's "Seven Steps To Heaven"). The West Coast band's tendency to double-time the slower tunes gives their music a slightly generic quality (Butler's distracting, repetitive snare clicks leading the charge). Despite this, the band's extended treatments of old favorites "Basin St. Blues" and "Baby, Won't You Please Come Home" are memorable. The East Coast band is clearly the more integrated. Definitive, albeit tame, studio versions of "Seven Steps" and Feldman's "Joshua" are slower, elongated progeny for what was to follow in live settings.

One of those settings was a benefit concert held in New York's Philharmonic Hall at Lincoln Center the following year, chronicled on *My Funny Valentine + Four & More* (Columbia/Legacy C2K 48821; 66:11/54:15; ★★★★★). Originally issued as two individual records, one of mostly ballads, the other, cookers, a half star is deducted due to the package's maintained incorrect song order for both discs (an opportunity missed). In any event, Coleman turns in



Miles Davis: of change and controversy

some inspired playing (according to Davis, his best), particularly on "My Funny Valentine" and Miles' "All Blues" (a late-'50s holdover waltz given an uptempo shot of rhythm & blues). Hancock, Carter, and Williams all perform with grace, poise, and fire. But it's Davis who plays some of his most impassioned trumpet on record. Leading his team up and down, in and out, through slow tempos and fast, stopping everything when the notes demanded it, the soul of a man sounds revealed through crying treatments of "Valentine," "Stella By Starlight," and "I Thought About You." It was this specific music that taught me the meaning of jazz—swing loved and forgotten amidst a musical organism composed of distinct parts, offering at once both vulnerability and assertiveness, improvisation with a thorough immersion and eventual abandonment of technique, all driven by the tension of a fresh, intoxicating rhythm team in Carter and Williams. Stripped-down versions of "Four," "Seven Steps To Heaven," "Walkin'," "So What," and "Joshua" all attest to a band pushing the music at furious, blinding speeds. Compare "Seven Steps" and "Joshua" with the '63 studio versions listed above for a study in rhythmic and harmonic overhaul. Gone is the need for formal statements, adherence to melodic shape and contour. Williams' drum solos remain free of the pulse as he chooses to extend the drums' range as a *musical* instrument. The ballads (again, there's a tendency to doubletime things) showcase Hancock, Coleman, and Davis' individual, lyrical expressions as they dispense with rhythm, restate themes, even go it alone at certain points. The '60s avant garde impinges in subtle, delightful ways, providing clues to this transitional band's method of deconstruction. Miles Davis' songbook was once again up for grabs.

Turning more than a few heads, *E.S.P.* (Columbia/Legacy CK 46863; 48:26; ★★★★★) was the first example of this massive facelift. Shorter's arrival provides the occasion for a whole new concept to studio recording. (This band continued, with very few exceptions, to

play the usual repertoire when performing live.) Davis and Shorter's uptempo "E.S.P." fittingly begins the set, with Shorter's tenor sounding like the perfect blend of Coleman's sweetness with Sam Rivers' tartness/sourness, Davis proudly turning in one blistering line after another. Outright funk enters the Davis canon with the Davis/Ron Carter tune "Eighty-One." Unfortunately, Hancock is given less solo time next to the front line on most of the uptempo pieces. "Agitation" opens the second half of *E.S.P.* with another classic unmetered solo by Williams (reminiscent of Elvin Jones' intro to side 2 of "Pursuance" on Coltrane's *A Love Supreme* a month earlier). "Agitation" became one of the few originals from this band to be played live—without Tony's intro (the studio take was actually a separate drum solo). *E.S.P.* also marks the emergence of this band's unabashed impressionism with originals, the lovely, melancholic "Little One," "Iris," and "Mood" taking the balladic treatment to new heights. Producer Irving Townsend's flat sonic glaze persists in the digital transfer.

We skip to 1966 and the even-more startling *Miles Smiles* (Columbia/Legacy CK 48849; 42:10: ★★★★★^{1/2}), grinning with four originals and one each from composer/saxophonists Eddie Harris and Jimmy Heath. Davis' exquisite waltz, "Circle," showcases his lyrical, muted-trumpet playing laden with sighs, slurs, and the occasional high note. Shorter and Hancock follow suit. The rest of the album, however, is more interested in experiments begun with *E.S.P.*'s more aggressive, modal side: Hancock lays out during Davis and Shorter's solos, with a solo-piano style more horn-like in conception, forsaking chords for single notes in the treble clef, with scaled-down arrangements, and generally simpler melodies with few or no harmonic references. (However devised, *Miles Smiles* clearly shows Ornette Coleman's invisible hand.) Shorter's "Orbits" and "Dolores" move the band closer to melodic abstraction, with Heath's "Ginger Bread Boy" getting a new arrangement as the closer. With a simpler, drier, more austere (and relatively piano-less) sound, the unrehearsed, rough *Miles Smiles* holds up so well simply because it was more of a jazz record, spontaneous warts and all: e.g., Hancock gets lost in his solo on Shorter's 6/4 vamp, "Footprints"; Davis and Shorter weave and bob on the out chorus to "Dolores" like two punch-drunk boxers who aren't sure how, or when, to stop. Regular producer Teo Macero returns (having produced everything else here except *E.S.P.*), bringing with him that more direct Davis band sound. (Digital transfers on all the titles sound very much like their analog counterparts—a blessing, perhaps.)

As *E.S.P.* and *Miles Smiles* clearly showed, Davis' new studio direction meant traditional song forms (e.g., with theme statement, bridge, and chorus) were now a thing of the past. Instead, looser sketches became the band's skeleton key, written primarily for improvisation and the extra-sensory perception that was becoming more and more a hallmark of this quintet.

Next month, we'll look at a few more recent reissues, 1968's *Filles De Kilimanjaro* and 1970's *Jack Johnson*, as well as *The Complete Live At The Plugged Nickel* recordings from 1965. Indeed, more from that controversial decade of the '60s.

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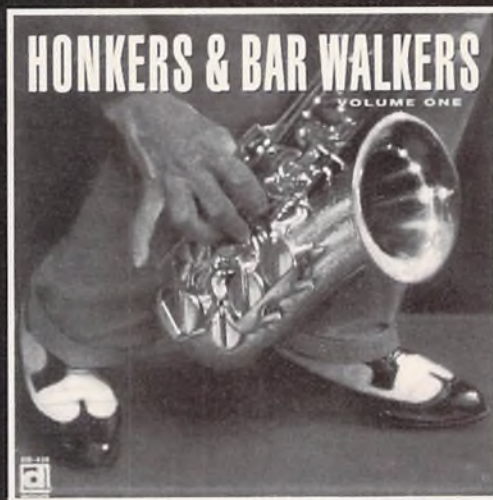
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RECORD & CD REVIEWS



Tete Montoliu

THE MUSIC I LIKE TO PLAY, VOL. 3: LET'S CALL THIS—Soul Note 121230-2: *STRAIGHT, NO CHASER; REFLECTIONS; IN WALKED BUD; MISTERIOSO; WELL, YOU NEEDN'T; APRIL IN PARIS; LET'S CALL THIS; SWEET AND LOVELY; BLUES FIVE SPOT; MONK'S MOOD; RHYTHM-A-NING.* (47:22)
Personnel: Montoliu, piano.

★ ★ ★ ★

THE MAN FROM BARCELONA—Timless CD SJP 368: *CONCIERTO DE ARANJUEZ; STELLA BY STARLIGHT; EASY LIVING; AUTUMN LEAVES; FOR YOU MY LOVE; TUNE UP; I FALL IN LOVE TOO EASILY; DJANGO; WHEN LIGHTS ARE LOW; PLEASE I LIKE TO BE GENTLE; A NIGHT IN TUNISIA.* (63:27)
Personnel: Montoliu, piano; George Mraz, bass; Lewis Nash, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

A SPANISH TREASURE—Concord Jazz CCD-4493: *ISRAEL; DON'T BLAME ME; TRICOTISM; MISTERIOSO; OUR DELIGHT; LIKE SOMEONE IN LOVE; THE WAY YOU LOOK TONIGHT; ALL OF YOU; WHAT'S NEW; ALL BLUES.* (60:03)
Personnel: Montoliu, piano; Rufus Reid, bass; Akira Tana, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

SONGS FOR LOVE—enja ENJ-2040 2: *RAINY DAY; DJANGO; TWO CATALAN SONGS; GENTOFTE 4349; APARTMENT; AUTUMN IN NEW YORK; BALLAD FOR LINE; LITTLE CAMILLA.* (43:24)
Personnel: Montoliu, piano.

★ ★ ★ ★

I first heard Montoliu on Ben Webster's *Did You Call?* (nessa n-8), recorded in 1972. It was near the end of Ben's life and he was playing sparsely, his breathy phrases a cloud of sighs. Montoliu, the perfect accompanist, countered with swirling embellishments that filled the holes. So, there was the impression of a pianist with the power to overwhelm and the taste to know when to recede. This impression remains throughout these four albums.

On *A Spanish Treasure*, each man seems independent, pursuing the music from his own angle yet coinciding with the others at critical junctures. Certain trios work this way, eschewing the obvious ensemble forces for more abstract reckoning. After Montoliu's florid introduction, "Israel" starts as a tight trio piece; then the pianist veers off into agile single lines with Reid springing off each beat and Tana rolling and bombing. "Don't Blame Me"—dig Reid's counterlines—conveys some of the late-night balladry associated with the Webster album. "All Of You" and "What's New" are Jamal-ish in their clipped, swinging way. So it goes, virtuosos at play—independent yet together.

The Man From Barcelona is more of a piano-with-accompaniment affair. The Catalonian pi-

anist salutes his native country with "Concierto De Aranjuez," the Rodrigo piece made famous in jazz circles by Miles Davis' *Sketches Of Spain*. A moody piano introduction sets the stage for lilting trio swing. On "Stella By Starlight," Mraz's LaFaro-esque solo shows that he's as agile and airborne as Montoliu. Nash trades tasteful "fours" with the pianist from time to time throughout the album. Although less aggressive than the *Spanish Treasure* trio, this one is a well-balanced unit that does the pianist's bidding.

Montoliu alone isn't much different from Montoliu in a trio. On *The Music I Love To Play* he tackles Monk, bringing off a conceptual meeting of Monk and Tatum. On "Well, You Needn't" we see in Montoliu the off-center fulcrum of Monk's piano style—the oddly syncopated interplay of left-hand thumps and right-hand reels. On the Monk ballads "Reflections" and "Monk's Mood" we see Montoliu's subtle way with inner voicings. Throughout, we see his fondness for quotes and his ability to personally interpret a composer whose tunes and piano approach were one.

Songs For Love, first issued in 1974, includes several well-known standards plus three tunes by Montoliu and the folksy "Two Catalan Songs" by Goan Manuel Serrat. As a solo recital it shows Montoliu's breadth in good light. He doesn't overplay the folk pieces. He makes "Django" both stately and bluesy. There are also the playful quality of his "Little Camilla" and the Tristano-like craziness of his "Apartment." Here and throughout these albums we sense a jazzman's singular identity firmly in place.

—Owen Cordle



Mike Clark & Paul Jackson

THE FUNK STOPS HERE—enja/Tiptoe TIP-8888112: *STEADY FREDDY; FOUR STRING DRIVE; SPIDER MAN; SWAMP THING; HOTEL DOMINGO; JURASIC PARK; FUNK IS... BILL DOGGETT; PITT & THE PENDULUM; SLINKY; STEADY FREDDY (REPRISE).* (46:19)

Personnel: Clark, drums; Jackson, bass, vocals (5); Kenny Garrett, saxes; Jeff Pittson, keyboards.

★ ★ ★ ★ 1/2

A good case can be made that the funk *started* here, given the influence that Jackson and Clark had as Herbie Hancock's rhythm section of the early 1970s (*Thrust*). The Meters and Sly and Tower Of Power were fooling around quite a bit with syncopation at the same time, but Clark and Jackson took it out onto an even freer playground. It's good to hear that the funk, as

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an adventure, still resides here.

From the perspective of funk or jazz fans, there isn't much missing from this date. Clark really makes his duet section with a soulful Kenny Garrett soar on "Steady Freddy." Clark is always looking for a twist in the groove—witness his insistent jabbing on "Four String Drive," the wild fade-out, and the outrageous funkiness to the drum parts of "Spider Man." Jackson throws in melodic combination after combination on bass—advance, retreat, always the aggressor—without ever letting go of the groove. His telepathy with Clark's jaunts on the less-beaten tracks is remarkable. They play a lot, although they also seem to leave a lot of space. The "1" is paid very little attention at times, or superimposed somewhere else in the measure just for funk. Garrett's high flight on "Swamp Thing" is exhilarating and disturbing—he leaves nothing inside the horn. And Pittson tells a compelling story from the piano on "Pitt & The Pendulum." These guys augment the two leaders just fine.

Now, if they could just find Blackbyrd McKnight for guitar. . . .
—Robin Tolleson



Jay Anderson

NEXT EXIT—DMP 490: *INSIDE LINE; NEXT EXIT; THE THIRD RAIL; DAYS ON END; WILL CALL; SLO' MO'; TIMES CHANGE; SOUND MIND; IN JULY; WITH WHOM? (54:39)*

Personnel: Anderson, bass; Randy Brecker, flugelhorn, trumpet; Billy Drewes, saxophones; Jeff Hirshfield, drums; Wayne Krantz, guitar; David Witham, synthesizers.

★★★★

The label might be DMP, but the strongest reference point on bassist Jay Anderson's debut as a leader is another three-letter acronym: ECM. Like many ECM albums, this one is marked by folk sonorities, harmonic sophistication, and a generally spacious approach to recording and music-making. Which is not at all to deride a very fine and fresh-sounding package.

Anderson's versatile, fixed ensemble quickly stakes out a sound and then navigates the multiple variations thereof, sensitively laid out in the bassist's compositions. This is a bona fide band of considerable breadth, between the two-horn format of Brecker and Drewes, Krantz' inventive guitar playing, Hirshfield's light touch (that crisp, ECM-ish, fleas-tap-dancing-on-the-ride-cymbal sound), and Witham's textural landscape detailing on keys contrasted with Anderson's unshakable acoustic bottom end. Anderson takes the lead on the

title cut, part tender ballad, part restless 5/4 riff-fest. "Will Call" is a sleeky-fast swing/bop vehicle, featuring the unsung eloquence of saxist Drewes. "Sound Mind" is an ethereal deconstructed bossa, while "In July" is a loose-jointed, Ornette Coleman-like rumble sparked by Krantz' literate antsiness.

With this warming and adventurous project, Anderson has managed a very successful exit onto the turnpike where good ideas reach landspeed. —Josef Woodard



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Dave Kikoski

PERSISTENT DREAMS—Triloka 7191-2: *LORD OF THE VINE; MORNING AFTER; TRAIN OF THOUGHT; SATELLITE; GREEN TREES; TOY TUNE; LONELY; FALLING IN LOVE WITH LOVE; PERSISTENT DREAMS.* (54:23)

Personnel: Kikoski, piano, synthesizer; Randy Brecker, trumpet (cuts 3,8); Dave Jensen, tenor saxophone (4,8); Ed Howard, acoustic bass (2,4, 6-8); James Genus, electric bass (1,3,5); Billy Hart (4,6-8), Ben Perowsky (1-3,5), drums; Alex Acuna, percussion (1,3,5); Cecelia Tenconi, flute (5); Vera Mera, vocals (1); Vadim Zilbershtein, guitar (5).

★★★ 1/2

Who is Dave Kikoski? He's a highly melodic pianist whose resumé includes work with Roy Haynes, Red Rodney, and Randy Brecker, suggesting equal attraction to fusion and straightahead jazz. He writes bright, often upbeat pieces, and his solos gather momentum, developing into precise torrents of notes.

Persistent Dreams offers something for everyone. "Lord Of The Vine" and "Green Trees" are air-playable fusion tunes, the former hinting at Chick Corea and Flora Purim. Kikoski rescues "Morning After" from pop-song oblivion through sheer swing and exuberance. These tunes are obviously pretty, but pretty obvious. The real meat can be found in covers of Coltrane's "Satellite" and Shorter's "Toy Tune," and in ingratiating originals like "Train Of Thought" and the title track.

"Satellite" got my attention right away. Billy Hart takes his only solo here, creating a whirlwind of beats. Kikoski's synthesizer suggests Coltrane's modal approach, engaging Hart and Dave Jensen's tenor. When Hart plays, the energy level increases noticeably. Hart should be heard more often. Randy Brecker's contribution is obvious. He appears on two tracks—he steals both. Steely Dan alumni Walter Becker and Roger Nichols give *Persistent Dreams* the clear, polished production you'd expect, though they favor a bright piano sound.

—Jon Andrews



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RECORD & CD REVIEWS



Nels Cline

SILENCER—enja 6098: LAS VEGAS TANGO;
MAGS; RAMPLING BY THE SEA; SACRED LOVE;
LUCILE'S TRIP; BROASTED; ANGELS OF THE HARBOR;
SILENCER; LAPSING (PART 1 & 2); EXILED. (68:49)
Personnel: Cline, guitar; Mark London Sims,
bass; Michael Preussner, drums.

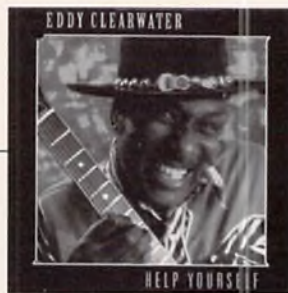
★ ★ ★ 1/2

A whole lot of people these days sound a whole lot like Bill Frisell. The best of them, like Nels Cline, are thoughtful enough to bring something of their own sound to the music. But the reference points are there—a certain (sometimes heavily processed) guitar tone, attack-less pedalwork that hardly sounds like a stringed instrument at all, emergent tone clusters and sophisticated chord substitutions, some stylistic diversity, maybe a Zornian non-sequitur or two. On tunes like "Mags," the long two-part journey "Lapsing," and the thrilling title cut, maybe even a portion of thrash mania. All that's missing is Frisell's country cowpoker.

Cline's an extremely adept player, as he proves on more conventional fusion-pickers, like "Lucile's Trip" and the driving solo on "Broasted" (dedicated to John Scofield, the disc's other primary referent). I'm not keen on his down numb-ers; moody noodles like "An-

gels Of The Harbor" and "Ramplng By The Sea" don't really develop into anything. The trio's delicate, melancholic rendition of Gil Evans' "Las Vegas Tango," however, is very beautiful, indeed, as is the similarly tempered "Exiled." Sims and Preussner make a sympathetic rhythm team, great support for Cline's attempt to build on the Frisell legacy. This is one of those proverbial ones that grows on you.

—John Corbett



Eddy Clearwater

HELP YOURSELF—Blind Pig BP 74792: WHO LOVES YOU BABY; HELP YOURSELF; SET IT OUT; ALL YOUR LOVE; CHICAGO WEATHER WOMAN; CROSS-OVER; THAT'S MY BABY; BIG TIME GAMBLER; LITTLE BIT OF BLUES; POISON IVY; MESSED UP WORLD; WE'RE OUT OF HERE. (42:40)

Personnel: Clearwater, guitars, vocals; Will Crosby, guitar; Bob Stroger, electric bass; Kurt Krahnke, acoustic bass; Brian "B.J." Jones, drums; Carey Bell, Little Mike (cut 10), harmonica; Jeff Taylor, background vocals.

★ ★ ★ ★

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paw blues guitarist Eddy Clearwater hurls out his boogies, shuffles, and aching blues ballads here, this raspy-voiced veteran of the vital Chicago blues scene must have had the time of his life. This is stout stuff that explodes out of the chute with the clipping original "Who Loves You Baby" and doesn't flag a beat until Clearwater grinds the party proceedings to a halt momentarily with his fine self-penned, cold-slow lament, "Chicago Weather Woman." Along the way there's a great take on Jimmy Reed's "Help Yourself" and a soulful dive into Otis Rush's "All Your Love."

Clearwater's only concession to his earlier work as a country, rockabilly, and rock performer are in his compelling rock-influenced solos (check out the exhilarating lines in the fade to the upbeat "Crossover" and the licks with bite on "Little Bit Of Blues"). Otherwise, Clearwater packs this album with one blues rush after another, ranging from the cooking groove on "That's My Baby" to the slow bleed of "Messed Up World." His riffs are catchy throughout, his vocals have that essential blues grit, and simpatico collaborations with his cousin, Chicago harp legend Carey Bell, on several numbers make for a special treat.

Over the course of his 35-year career, Clearwater has recorded sides for a number of independent labels, including an album for the England-based company Red Lightnin' (the collection garnered a W.C. Handy Award for best import blues album). This latest release, Clearwater's Blind Pig debut, holds lots of promise for getting the good word out on another talented, but underexposed and overlooked blues artist. —Dan Ouellette



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Personnel: Akira Tana, drums; Rufus Reid, bass; Rob Schneiderman, piano; Craig Bailey, alto saxophone; Dan Faulk, tenor, soprano saxophones; Guilherme Franco, congas, percussion (cuts 2, 6, 10).

★ ★ ★ ½

Rob Schneiderman

RADIO WAVES—Reservoir 120: *EXTRA TIME*; *GRAVITATION*; *BLUE MOON*; *THERE'S A SMALL HOTEL*; *SLAPDANCE-TAPSTICK*; *BEEN THERE BEFORE*; *RADIO WAVES*; *THE JUGGLER*; *TWELVE TONES OF*

BLUE. (70:57)

Personnel: Schneiderman, piano; Brian Lynch, trumpet; Ralph Moore, tenor saxophone; Gary Smulyan, baritone saxophone; Todd Coolman, bass; Jeff Hirshfield, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

Rufus Reid and Akira Tana had little time to relish the critical praise garnered by *Yours And Mine*, last year's debut of their Big Apple quintet, before sustaining the departure of talented young reed players Ralph Moore and

Jesse Davis. Well, the reconstructed TanaReid quintet has been active recently in the studio and the result is worth hearing.

As expected, Reid's bass playing is creative, authoritative, and unselfconscious, whether swinging Kenny Wheeler's "Hotel Le Hot" or lending gentle rhyme to Reid's pretty ballad, "It's The Magical Look In Your Eyes." While no slouch as muscular soloist, his strongest presence is moving in close, relaxed cooperation with Tana, a reputable drummer always appreciated more for his subtle shadings of conge-

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niality than for his panache. Pianist Rob Schneiderman segues appealingly through the changes with not only craftsmanship but expressiveness, taking over on Irving Berlin's "Cheek To Cheek," where he evinces both close intimacy with the evergreen and an adventurous spirit. Saxophonists Craig Bailey, a former Ray Charles altoman, and Dan Faulk are talented soloists—the former has a feel for upper-register bluesiness—but neither contributes to a sense of the contrapuntal magic found with a fully integrated group.

Schneiderman's third feature outing for Reservoir has the 35-year-old New Yorker working with five equals. All bring an attitude composed of equal parts soberness, dash, and savor-faire to seven provocatively intelligent Schneiderman songs and a couple re-roasted Rodgers & Hart chestnuts. The principal soloists—saxists Ralph Moore and Gary Smulyan, trumpeter Brian Lynch, and Schneiderman—fit their stellar lines together or back-to-back amid the precise flux of the rhythm section, helping construct a communicative modern jazz of rich colors and intricate designs. A sleeper.
—Frank-John Hadley

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Gary Thomas

THE KOLD KAGE—JMT 849 151-2: *THRESHOLD; GATES OF FACES; INTELLECT; INFERNAL MACHINE; THE DIVIDE; PEACE OF THE KORRIDOR; FIRST STRIKE; BEYOND THE FALL OF NIGHT; THE KOLD KAGE; KULTURE BANDITS (TO BE CONTINUED)*, (60:15)

Personnel: Thomas, tenor sax, flute, synthesizers, rap vocals (7,9,10); Anthony Cox, acoustic bass; Dennis Chambers, drums; Joe Wesson, rap vocals (3,4,7); Kevin Eubanks, guitar (1,3,6); Paul Bollenbeck, guitar, guitar synthesizers (2,5); Mulgrew Miller, piano (2,7); Michael Cain (1,6), Tim Murphy (3,4,5,9), piano, synthesizers; Anthony Perkins, synthesizers (8,10); Steve Moss, percussion.

★ ★ ★ 1/2

Thomas has been on this trip for four or five years now. The recipe calls for slamming backbeats, irregular meters, angular heads, ominous harmonies, and plenty of free-flowing solos on top of herky-jerky New Jack grooves. This time around, he's added angry rapping to the formula to match his Herculean tenor ("Gates Of Faces," "First Strike") and distinctive flute work ("Intellect," "Peace Of The Korridor"). Like Steve Coleman and Greg Osby, Thomas is presenting a bridge between Public Enemy, James Brown, and Charlie Parker. A threat to some, an invitation to others. —Bill Milkowski



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Chico Hamilton

REUNION—Soul Note 121191-2: *I WANT TO BE HAPPY; DELIGHTFUL, CHARMING AND COOL; BRUSHING WITH B; AIN'T NOBODY CALLING ME; MAGALI; SHIRLEY; CONVERSATION; THESE ARE THE DUES; DREAMS OF YOUTH; FIVE FRIENDS; REUNION.* (54:53)

Personnel: Hamilton, drums, vocal; Buddy Collette, flute, clarinet, also sax; Fred Katz, cello; John Pisano, guitar; Carson Smith, bass.

★★★★ 1/2

This 1989 date by the original Chico Hamilton Quintet recreates the unique chemistry of the pianoless quintet Hamilton led from '55 to '61. Katz's bowed cello adds an intriguing texture while Pisano, who replaced Jim Hall in the second edition of the original quintet, plays the elegant, fluid plectrist. But the real standout is Collette, who blows velvety alto ("Ain't Nobody Calling Me"), pungent clarinet ("Delightful, Charming And Cool"), and brisk flute lines ("Magali"). The improvised duets between Hamilton and Collette on "Brushing With B" and "Conversation" are classic examples of listening and reacting. Highpoint is the daring group improv, "Five Friends."
—B.M.



Rudy Linka

NEWS FROM HOME—Arta F1 0026-2511: *Bob's Tune; Alone Together; Collage; Waltz For John; Evidence; Dear Friend; To Be Named Later; So Why Not?; News From Home; Dialogue.* (54:11)

Personnel: Linka, guitar, guitar synth; Bob Mintzer, tenor sax; Jay Anderson, bass; Bruce Hall, drums.

★★★★ 1/2

A debut by the Abercrombie-influenced Czech guitarist finds him split between a brighter commercial bag ("Bob's Tune," "Collage") and a more subdued Jim Hall standards bag ("Alone Together"). The always reliable Bob Mintzer gets to stretch considerably more than he does in his Yellowjackets role on "To Be



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Named Later" and a swinging "Evidence," with some eccentric guitar synth statements. Linka, an accomplished Berklee-trained guitarist, plays it fairly conservatively throughout but hints at an original voice on "Dear Friend" and the title cut. —B.M.



Aydin Esen

ANADOLU—Columbia CK 48811: *ANADOLU; THE WAY IN; SONG FOR SANTISI; ALL OF A SUDDEN; LOVE'S HAUNTS; CAFE BOUQUET; THE ROLL OF TIME; CONFIDENCE IN DREAMS; CRYSTALLINE; PAS-SAGES; DEEPLY REMOVED.* (67:22)

Personnel: Esen, piano, keyboards; Peter Erskine, drums; Dave Holland, acoustic bass; Anthony Jackson, electric bass (1,6); Jon Faddis, trumpet; Bob Mintzer, bass clarinet, tenor sax; Dave Barger, trombone; Mino Cinelu, percussion; Dave Liebman, soprano sax (1,3,4,7,8); Fred Sherry, cello (9); Stephen Taylor, oboe, english horn (9); Randy Kartingner, vocal (10).

★ ★ ★ ★

Turkish piano whiz Esen showcases prodigious chops and a mature compositional sense on this Columbia debut, a more fully realized and artistically challenging project than his previous Sunnyside piano-trio dates. An all-star cast tackles this ambitious Corea-inspired material, which ranges from crisp, fusionesque romps ("Anadolu"), frantic, swinging quartet vehicles ("All Of A Sudden"), luxurious octet arrangements ("Love's Haunts"), one bravado solo piece ("The Way In"), and more somber chamber-type undertakings ("Crystalline"). Erskine and Holland provide the backbone, Esen delivers lots of soul with the chops. —B.M.



Justin Robinson

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| 133 | Manhattan Transfer | 224 | Take 6 |
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| 152 | Spyro Gyra | 124 | Robert Cray |
| 191 | Branford Marsalis | 134 | Taj Mahal |
| 200 | Marcus Roberts | 214 | Charlie Musselwhite |
| 119 | Gerald Albright | 110 | Koko Taylor and her Blues Machine |
| 209 | David Benoit | 215 | Lionie Brooks Blues Band |
| 192 | Mel Torme | 205 | Lil Ed & The Blues Imperials |
| 136 | Lionel Hampton | 135 | Son Seals |
| 202 | Ellis Marsalis | 187 | Tinsley Ellis |
| 137 | Benny Green | 108 | Saffire |
| 142 | Tony Williams | 197 | John Lee Hooker |
| 114 | Chick Corea | 123 | Bo Diddley |
| 193 | Harper Brothers | 139 | Candy Dulfer |
| 210 | Lee Ritenour | 122 | Charlie Byrd |
| 121 | Max Roach | 196 | Earl Klugh |
| 203 | Tito Puente | 117 | Mahlaithini & The Mahotella Queens |
| 144 | Turtle Island String Quartet | 116 | The Rippingtons |
| 213 | Acoustic Alchemy | 148 | Michael Brecker |

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| 207 | Stanley Jordan |
| 149 | Yellowjackets |
| 127 | Dirty Dozen Brass |
| 208 | David Lanz |
| 211 | Bela Fleck & The Flecktones |
| 218 | Mark Whitfield |
| 220 | Grover Washington Jr. |
| 129 | George Benson |
| 225 | John Pizzarelli |
| 227 | Marion Meadows |
| 229 | Basia |
| 235 | Weather Report |
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| 262 | Straight Ahead |
| 263 | Al DiMeola |

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| 317 | Wynonna Judd |
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| 156 | Arkansas/LA |
| 157 | Southern California |
| 158 | Northern California |
| 159 | Colorado |
| 160 | Florida |
| 161 | Maryland / VA / WV |
| 162 | New England |
| 163 | Pennsylvania |
| 164 | Michigan |
| 165 | Tennessee/Kentucky |
| 167 | Texas |
| 168 | Ohio |
| 169 | North Carolina |
| 171 | Missouri |
| 172 | Washington/OR |
| 173 | Alabama/Mississippi |
| 175 | Wisconsin/Minn. |
| 176 | Arizona/NM |
| 177 | SC/Georgia |
| 178 | Iowa/Nebraska |
| 179 | N Dakota/S Dakota |
| 180 | Nevada/Utah |
| 181 | Oklahoma/Kansas |
| 182 | Wyoming>ID/MT |
| 183 | Hawaii/Alaska |
| 184 | New Jersey/DE |

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| ID# | Artist |
|-----|-----------------------|
| 277 | Sanjana |
| 287 | Smokey Robinson |
| 268 | Bob Dylan |
| 293 | Fabulous Thunderbirds |
| 274 | Edgar Winter |
| 266 | Blues Traveler |
| 321 | Grateful Dead |
| 295 | Johnny Mathis |
| 275 | Los Lobos |
| 270 | Judy Collins |
| 271 | Neil Diamond |
| 265 | Eric Clapton |
| 269 | James Taylor |
| 303 | Righteous Brothers |
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BE TOGETHER AGAIN; GINGERBREAD BOY. (48:55)
Personnel: Robinson, alto sax; Kenny Barron, piano; Peter Washington, bass; Lewis Nash, drums; Eddie Henderson, trumpet (2,5,6); Stephen Scott, piano (5); Javon Jackson, tenor sax (4,5); Clifton Anderson, trombone (4); Bobby Watson and Gary Bartz, alto sax (8).

★ ★ ★ 1/2

The young man who made his mark with the Harper Brothers steps out in convincing fashion on his debut as a leader, produced by

mentor Bobby Watson. Robinson exhibits a bold tone and remarkable fluidity. His obvious technical facility on the burners ("Ode For Aaron," "At The Drop Of A Hat") is wisely tempered by a sense of relaxed phrasing and soulful feeling on the ballads ("Katreese," "We'll Be Together Again"). And he passes the bop litmus test ("Gingerbread Boy") with flying colors, holding his own in a cutting contest with elders Watson and Gary Bartz. But while Robinson is the focal point here, the stellar rhythm section makes this session happen. —B.M.



Nat Adderley

THE OLD COUNTRY—enja 7027 2: *THE OLD COUNTRY; BOHEMIA AFTER DARK; JEANNINE; ALMOST ALWAYS; LOVE FOR SALE; ONE FOR DADDY-O; STELLA BY STARLIGHT; THE CHANT; NIPPON SOUL. (57:29)*

Personnel: Adderley, cornet; Vincent Herring, alto sax; Rob Bargad, piano; James Genus, bass; Billy Drummond, drums.

★ ★ ★ 1/2

This high-spirited, swinging quintet burns through a set of standards and Adderley originals. Nat adds a touch of class with his burnished tones, but young upstart Vincent Herring steals the show with his ferocious alto work. His solos on "Stella" and "The Chant" are highpoints. And he blows with toe-curling intensity on the slow Adderley blues "One For Daddy-O." Everything lays right and feels good on this session. —B.M.

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Lionel Hampton

LIONEL HAMPTON AND FRIENDS VOL. 1—Telarc CD-83318: *SEVEN COME ELEVEN; LINE FOR LYONS; CHEROKEE; SO LONG ERIC; I KNOW THAT YOU KNOW; STARDUST; CUTE; SWEET SUE; SLOP; GERRY MEETS HAMP. (64:30)*

Personnel: Hampton, vibes; and a cast of dozens.

★ ★ ★ 1/2

This one from the archives, most of it recorded in 1977, could've been subtitled *Swingin' And Smilin'*. These tracks, featuring such renown extroverts as Milt Hinton, Earl Hines, Clark Terry, and the irrepressible Hamp himself, exude personality and keep your toe tapping. Guest appearances by Buddy Rich ("Cherokee"), Charles Mingus ("Slop," "So Long Eric"), Teddy Wilson ("Sweet Sue"), and Dexter Gordon ("Seven Come Eleven") make this disc something of a collector's item. Rarest track in this historic jazz summit meeting is the 1969 session with Coleman Hawkins ("Stardust"). More to come on Vol. 2. —B.M.

1 George Van Eps

"Ain't Misbehavin'" (from *13 STRINGS, Concord Jazz, 1991*).

I haven't heard anything like that in a long time. I'd have to give that 4½ stars. If it wasn't George Van Eps, somebody influenced by him; I don't know who else even plays 7-string, maybe Bucky Pizzarelli. Van Eps was a big influence on me in a way I didn't realize until years later. I used to listen to his albums at Berklee. I was amazed that it could be done by one man at one time on a guitar—very contrapuntal, incorporating bass line, melody line, inner voices. [His giving up pick for fingerstyle was] very influential on my view of guitar playing, right up there with Jim Hall. I really enjoyed that tune.

2 Laurindo Almeida/Bud Shank

"Speak Low" (from *BRAZILLIANCE, I, World Pacific, 1953*) Almeida, acoustic guitar; Shank, alto saxophone.

That wasn't recorded yesterday, either. It might be somebody like Charlie Byrd or Laurindo Almeida with Paul Desmond. About 3½ stars. Interesting reharmonizations in the guitar head. Overall not a bad performance, perhaps done when bossa nova was beginning to get popular and riding that gravy train. The soloists didn't stretch out, but the playing was adequate.

3 Nicky Skopelitis/Sonny Sharrock

"Mescalito" (from *FAITH MOVES, CMP, 1990*) Skopelitis, Sharrock, various & sundry electric guitars.

I thought at first this was one of those tongue-in-cheek [Bill] Frisell tracks, or David Torn. But then I thought, "This is the way they actually play." I don't have a clue: it doesn't sound like anyone I think I know. It could have gone on a little longer; I was disappointed by the fade. The lead guitar [with the distortion] had a peculiar sound that I don't think I've heard before: a vocal quality in the sustains that worked well. They don't sound American but rather ethnic, non-Western. 3.

4 Pat Metheny

"Goin' Ahead" (from *80/81, ECM, 1980*).

The sound of that was very pleasing: the balance of the two parts, the time feel. If this was Pat, it was something I haven't heard

by Fred Bouchard

Mick Goodrick has been a guitar guru around Boston since his Berklee student days in the '60s, guiding players like Pat Metheny and John Abercrombie. He may look like a bald, placid Buddha, but Goodrick has not been one to sit musically, having contributed strongly to the groups of Gary Burton, Jack DeJohnette, and, since 1982, Charlie Haden's Liberation Music Orchestra. Today, Mick's musical quest takes him to Italy with Claudio Fasoli and Pino Candeli, European festivals and clubs, into rap and hip-hop with Gary Thomas. At home, he often duets with recent pupil/pardner Wolfgang Muthspiel at Ryle's, Cambridge. Recent work—trio, quartet with Harvie Swartz—perfectly balances inspired musicality with meticulous control.

In his first BT, Mick exhibited model form: he took his time, asked no ques-

tions, listened raptly, gave judicious comments, asked to hear more—or less.

him do. The accompanying part was more adventuresome than things I've heard him do with acoustic instruments. If it's one person overdubbing both parts and it isn't Pat, I'd say, "You sound too much like Pat." But then, I have to say that a lot, because I get students, especially from Europe, who try to sound like Pat or [John] Scofield. I say, "You sound pretty good, but why don't you try to develop something of your own?" I enjoyed it; very well-played; 4½.

5 Pat Martino

"Along Came Betty" (from *CONSCIOUSNESS, Muse, 1974*).

Very well performed, 4½. Good control of the pick, fluid lines, interesting solo. I was never a very good pick player, but I enjoy the style done well. Precise sense of time. It reminded me of Emily [Remler], Pat Martino, George Benson, Louis Stewart. The tune? By Benny Golson for Herb Pomeroy's wife. I used to hear Herb and the guys play this at the Jazz Workshop in the early '60s when I was a student at Berklee.

6 Leni Stern

"Easy Now" (from *SECRETS, enja, 1989*) Stern, Wayne Krantz, electric guitars; Harvie Swartz, bass.

That was nice. Gee, I don't know if it was one guitar overdubbed or two, but again it was well-balanced. The composition had enough

MICK GOODRICK



harmonic change to keep my interest up, good soloing. The bass sounded like Harvie or Michael Moore. Very musical; 4½.

7 Artie Shaw

"Sad Sack" (from *LAST RECORDINGS, MusicMasters, 1954*) Shaw, clarinet; Hank Jones, piano; Tal Farlow, electric guitar.

That was very enjoyable. Most of these things I've never heard before, or haven't heard in a long time. The ensemble playing was very good, the solos all excellent, really interesting. That piano was great. I was pleasantly surprised. Benny Goodman and Charlie Christian? 5 stars.

8 Jim Hall

"My One And Only Love" (from *COMMITMENT, A&M Horizon, 1976*) Hall, guitar; Tommy Flanagan, piano.

That's beautiful. I've never heard that before. It's "My One And Only Love" played by Jim Hall with a pianist other than Bill Evans. Roger Kellaway crossed my mind, maybe Tommy Flanagan—a fine pianist with great time, wonderful textures, great voicings. The time was impeccable through the whole thing; nowadays it'd be a click track. Very comfortable forward motion. I liked the blend of the instruments, like the recording *Undercurrent* [a Hall/Evans duo]. This is new to me, a real treat. 5 stars. DB