

57TH ANNUAL READERS POLL

# DOWN BEAT

*Jazz, Blues & Beyond*

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## Wynton's Decade

**Sonny Rollins**

**Betty Carter  
& John Hicks**

**Joey DeFrancesco**





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**'It's Time For Jazz'**

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Betty Carter  
and  
John Hicks

TERIBLOOM

# Wynton's



LISA SEFERT

# Decade

**F**or Wynton Marsalis, and for jazz itself, the past decade has brought profound and unexpected change.

Ten years ago, young players in crisply pressed suits were not yet being signed by major record labels; Lincoln Center in New York was not yet presenting an 11-month jazz season; the Ravinia Festival near Chicago had not yet begun its ground-breaking Jazz In June series; nightclubs in Chicago, Los Angeles, Manhattan, New Orleans, and other musical centers were not yet drawing young listeners previously hooked on the relentless backbeat of rock & roll.

Though no single musician deserves full credit for these developments, there seems little question that Marsalis has been essential in igniting them. Along the way, he has been celebrated, criticized, lionized, vilified, televised, and endlessly analyzed.

For Marsalis, who first appeared on *DB*'s cover 10 years ago this month, it has been a most volatile decade.

"Man, the scene has changed a lot since then, definitely," says Marsalis, referring to his first days as a leader, in 1982. "When we first came on, we were fighting just to play jazz, on any level—just to play it. Just the whole philosophy of playing it was considered

strange. It seemed like so many people [in the music business] were bowed down before rock music, before the altar of rock. That was the struggle, and that was the source of a lot of the problems we had. In the beginning it was rough.

"And then it was always written that I was against rock music and against pop music, which really wasn't true—it was just that I was trying to see it put in proper perspective. And the whole question of whether we wore suits and all of that—now I'll show you pictures of when I was growing up, we never had suits at home. It wasn't a matter of making a social statement, even though some people were trying to tie it in with Ronald Reagan and all that stuff about conservatism. That was totally ridiculous."

How times have changed. Younger artists—such as pianist Marcus Roberts, trumpeters Roy Hargrove and Marlon Jordan, the Harper Brothers band, alto saxophonist Christopher Hollyday, and scores more—now routinely sport the sleek garb and musical traditionalism that years ago were among Marsalis' trademarks. And when Lincoln Center unveiled its sweeping jazz program roughly two years ago, its choice of Marsalis as artistic director was no surprise.

Most important, Marsalis' music has grown well beyond his technically strong but artistically derivative work of the early '80s. In the past few years, he has yielded recordings of remarkable substance and originality, beginning with the incantatory *Majesty Of The Blues* (released in 1989), and followed in remarkably quick succession with his propulsive soundtrack for the film *Time In Tomorrow* (1990), his profound study of New Orleans idioms in the CD trilogy *Soul Gestures In Southern Blue* (1991), and his fiercely modern tone poem, *Blue Interlude* (1992).

Recorded—but not yet released—is his nearly two-hour evocation of gospel idioms, *In This House/On This Morning* (1992), and an urban portrait created for and performed with the Garth Fagan Dance company, titled *Griot New York* (1991). His latest magnum opus is a six-movement score to be danced to by the New York City Ballet in January.

**F**or Marsalis, the turning point that transformed an aspiring artist into a leader took place in one of the foremost jazz "schools" of all, the Art Blakey band of the late '70s. "Art Blakey was always open to different ideas—he would check out what you were saying," recalls Marsalis. "In fact, the reason he could always get good [young] musicians in his band was his talent for being able to listen for what you were doing instead of what you weren't doing.

"And the reason I started wearing suits also was because of Art Blakey's band, because we would be playing in overalls, and I was embarrassed, man. I was thinking, 'I'm not standing up here with the great Art Blakey playing in overalls.' So I said, 'Look, man, tomorrow I'm coming to this gig with a suit on.' And I went out and got a polyester suit. I didn't have any real style, so I got this gray polyester three-piece deal, a maroon tie, and a derby. I still remember that suit. And after that we started getting clean. For us, it was a statement of seriousness. We come out here, we try to entertain our audience and play, and we want to look good so that they can feel good.

"Or maybe," jokes Marsalis. "maybe we felt that even if we don't sound good, at least we look good. But it wasn't calculated. I never

knew what the response to any of what we were doing was going to be. I was new to all that publicity, man, and I didn't know anything about that. I was just trying to play trumpet. But Art said it was a good idea. He said, 'Yes, it's time to get clean again.'"

Because Marsalis' early work as a leader owed a debt to Miles Davis' great mid-'60s quintet, Marsalis found himself often compared to Davis, not often favorably. At the very least, an

uneasy relationship emerged between the two musicians. "He and I, we knew each other well," says Marsalis. "And the stuff in the media [about our relationship] was just the stuff in the media.

"Because his music had a profound impact on me as a musician. And he knew this, because he and I would sit down and talk, and we would discuss all of his music—I mean the music that he was really seriously playing.

But, then again, he made things more difficult for me, because I was trying to build jazz up, and represent it, which he had represented so magnificently when he was serious.

"But unfortunately, by the time I came around, he had bent over so far for rock & roll that he was a hindrance. Like I would go to jazz festivals, and he would be there playing rock music or funk or something—he was always saying something negative about jazz music. And he could always be held up by the opponents of jazz as some kind of an example. He was like a great general who goes over to the other side.

"So you respect his achievements when he was a great general, but he put me in a strange position, because I had to deal with representing the music and yet not turn it into anything personal [between us]. I was very sorry over his death, of course, but I can't say that I supported his positions.

"See, he did abdicate his position, but it wasn't like he was being forced out. It wasn't like a Louis Armstrong-King Oliver situation, where I was playing so much horn that it scared him or any of that. I was trying to play, and he wasn't, so we never had that kind of a competition. And I don't have any problem accepting the leadership of elders—that's not a problem with me."

**B**y the mid-'80s, Marsalis found himself forced to make a choice. Because he had won classical and jazz Grammys in both '83 and '84, he was being tugged at by both worlds, in demand in both settings. "I couldn't keep doing both," Marsalis once told this writer. "I was playing concertos every night, and sometimes I would be nervous, unless I had been on tour for three or four months and had gotten used to it.

"It takes a lot to develop as a jazz musician, and I couldn't find the time to keep my classical technique up. Finally, given the choice, I had to take jazz, because it's what attracted me to music in the first place."

Perhaps it was that decision, plus the years of constant touring and recording, that enabled Marsalis to finally find his own voice. After releasing the Grammy-winning *Marsalis Standard Time* (the first of three *Standard Time* recordings) in 1987, Marsalis went into the recording studio to put down the music that would be released as *Majesty Of The Blues* and the *Soul Gestures In Southern Blue* trilogy. Both explore historic forms—marches, dirges, blues, parade music, etc.—and were imbued with contemporary harmonies and a lean, distinctly modern point of view. They were fervently lyrical recordings, and they proved that Marsalis had

“ . . . unfortunately, by the time I came around, [Miles Davis] had bent over so far for rock & roll that he was a hindrance. . . . He was like a great general who goes over to the other side.”



found a personal kind of inspiration in the music and atmosphere of his birthplace, New Orleans.

"They came out as one album [*Majesty*] and three albums [*Soul Gestures*], but I really thought of them as a four-album set," says Marsalis. "And it came out of a desire to really address the broad range of blues music, because that's what I felt we needed to deal with in our generation, to really get a good centering. But not to just try to play folk blues, but to use the elements of the blues and deal with the fundamentals, from a contemporary standpoint.

"See, the big thing was, really, when Herlin [Riley, the drummer] and Reginald [Veal on bass] joined, because the rhythm is the heart of a band. Herlin came from the New Orleans tradition, and Reginald wanted to play that kind of music, and Marcus [Roberts], wanted to play like this, too. So the whole statement of those albums was that we were just trying not to be in any one time [period, stylistically]. We were trying to say that it's not a matter of the time, because jazz music is perpetually modern. The history of jazz music is not supposed to develop like European music is. Everybody just takes for granted that you're supposed to, every year, have some new trend to stack on top of everything else. "But what if the earliest music stays modern, which is the case in jazz music. And it evolves through a certain type of individuality. Like when we play New Orleans music today, it doesn't sound like when the older musicians played it. But it still has that same joy and that same type of optimism. So *Majesty Of The Blues* is real modern music. Nothing had really been done like that, because it also uses funk music. The bass vamp is a funk vamp. But the groove comes from something else, and then there is the blues. The 'Death Of Jazz' [track on *Majesty Of The Blues*] is straight blues, like New Orleans call & response, the triads like in the church, like gospel music."

**D**ifferent in the best sense of the word, for what Marsalis' group was playing and recording sounded like no one else. The audaciously bent pitches and incantation-like ostinatos of *Majesty Of The Blues*, the crying blue notes of "Levee Low Moan," the church harmonies of "Psalm 26," the sultry ambience of "Thick In The South" (all from *Soul Gestures In Southern Blue*), all recalled different settings and epochs in New Orleans music. And yet, the tautness of Marsalis' septet, the economy of the motifs and the adventurousness of the harmonies proclaimed this as new music, as well.

At the center of this sound was an intense, long-lined lyricism that now graced almost everything Marsalis was playing. The fervency of his melodic line instantly distinguished him from every trumpeter of his generation.

"Sometimes I just like to play a straight melody, something that might seem corny to somebody else," says Marsalis. "Like on *Standard Time, Volume 3*, with my daddy, I wasn't trying to play a lot. I just wanted to play the melody, to learn how to really play a good melody. But, then, sometimes I really want to embellish a melody and play fast, like a saxophone. And other times I just want to play quarter notes, like a trumpet. So I'm always trying to just figure out another way to play the trumpet, to put it into another context, and not to play in a style. That's the one thing I don't want to do.

"I don't want to be a bebop trumpeter or a swing trumpeter or a New Orleans trumpeter. I want to try to really address the trumpet, period. If it's baroque trumpet, if it's the Hindemith trumpet sonata, whatever."

At roughly the same time that Marsalis was establishing his voice as a composer, in the late '80s, he was finding another creative outlet as well—Jazz at Lincoln Center. "The idea was to really establish a base to get pertinent information about the music out to a wider range of people," says Marsalis, who serves as artistic director of a program jointly steered by Director Rob Gibson and artistic consultants Stanley Crouch and Albert Murray. "And the belief that a place like Lincoln Center means that the soul is gone from the music or it's going to be like a museum piece or is a repertory band—that's just not true. It's just another setting, and what better setting than a place where the other arts are being celebrated? Like jazz is supposed to stay in Lulu White's house?"

As for Jazz at Lincoln Center, the 1992-'93 season has 11 overlapping subscription packages, including theme series on *Classical Jazz* (music of Thelonious Monk, Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Cannonball Adderley, etc.), *New Orleans Legacy* (music of Jelly Roll Morton and Johnny Dodds), and *Jazz On Film*, among others.

"What we're essentially trying to do is create a jazz canon," says Jazz at Lincoln Center Director Gibson. "I would define a canon as a representative anthology of jazz creation. And I believe after 100 years of jazz, and with this country being 220 years old, the country is ready to deal with its own history and music.

"In 1960, there was a committee—including Dr. Billy Taylor and Gunther Schuller—that wanted to have jazz in Lincoln Center, but it was rejected. Why, I'm not exactly sure. But I think the thing that changed more than anything, and made it possible for this program to happen," adds Gibson, whose program has a budget of \$1.8 million, "was that in 1987 there was a guy who could play on trumpet a Haydn concerto with a symphony orchestra as well as anyone else could, then take a cab to a club and play with Art Blakey. So Wynton has had a whole lot to do with making something like Jazz at Lincoln Center possible."



With (from back) Lew Soloff and Umar Sharif in the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra trumpet section

*"I don't want to be a bebop trumpeter or a swing trumpeter or a New Orleans trumpeter. I want to try to really address the trumpet, period."*

**F**or future seasons, Marsalis hopes to "try to get more of the community involved in the music. We already have a couple of outreach concerts, we play in the different ballrooms of Manhattan. We have long-range goals—things like a competition for bands, an outreach program to the high schools, a picnic with jazz people coming out and having maybe a sweet-potato pie contest—just to let people get in touch with the music. We might have a Duke Ellington contest, in which high school bands would play his music. We haven't planned it yet, but it's a possibility.

"We want to continue having Latin music, maybe commission some music. We want to get the most modern music in Lincoln

Center, too. So, mainly, we want to codify information on the music and present it, through radio shows, through video releases under the banner of Lincoln Center."

Along these lines, says Gibson, all the Lincoln Center jazz programs are being taped for potential broadcast and distribution. And lest anyone consider these pipe dreams, it's worth noting that Jazz at Lincoln Center has brought Marsalis' label, Columbia Records, into the picture. The label just released *Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra: Portraits By Ellington*, and "that's just the first of a series of recordings we'll be doing in association with Jazz at Lincoln Center," says Columbia executive Kevin Gore.

To Marsalis, all this activity is part and parcel of educating listeners, especially young listeners, to the meaning of jazz. For years, Marsalis has been going to the schools, coaching, teaching, lecturing, and trying to inspire youngsters. He finds that the kids "are hungry to learn, but we need curriculum, we need a canon, we need to find ways to get the school boards interested in seeing that American culture is taught," he says. "It's just a growing process, and we have to go from the complaining stage to the stage of action.

"You know, I've complained for a long time. I'm tired of complaining. It's time for us to get into the schools and take control of the situation. When I see teenagers, what I see is undeveloped potential. In general, young people are looking to find themselves. They're trying to develop their sexuality, they're trying to determine what kind of an adult they want to be. But young people really want adults to provide them with a direction. So if you come in trying to do a poll of what the kids like, that's no good.

"I believe in what Art Blakey and my daddy and Alvin Batiste and all my teachers represented to me—adult figures, so that you tried to be hip enough to address *them*. They weren't trying to act like *you*. And me and my brothers could make more money in high school than my father could make on gigs. We made \$100 a night playing funk, and he was making \$35 or \$40 on gigs. But we never had the impression we knew anything about music next to him, and he never gave us that impression."

To Marsalis, the recent, heightened activity in jazz—Jazz at Lincoln Center, the Columbia Records projects, the proliferation of new artists—suggests "a movement that's just beginning, a movement to recognize the American arts, and to recognize that the arts have actually put us in greater contact with what it means to be in a democracy. Jazz is a democracy, because jazz is, number one, the willingness to swing. "And swinging is a matter of coordination, and the coordination means that you are willing to communicate with other people. That's how swinging is—you get three or four people together, and the only way they can swing is if they work together. And that's what democracy is—freedom of

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"People are ready to be Americans, and that's why it's time for jazz."  
DB

## EQUIPMENT

Marsalis plays a custom-made trumpet by David Monette, formerly of Chicago and now based in Portland, Ore. Monette calls the horn the Raja trumpet, named for "the highest form of yoga." Its unique characteristic is an integral mouthpiece that makes the trumpet literally a single structure. Monette says he has made about a dozen of the Raja trumpets to date, though "Wynton's is by far the fanciest."

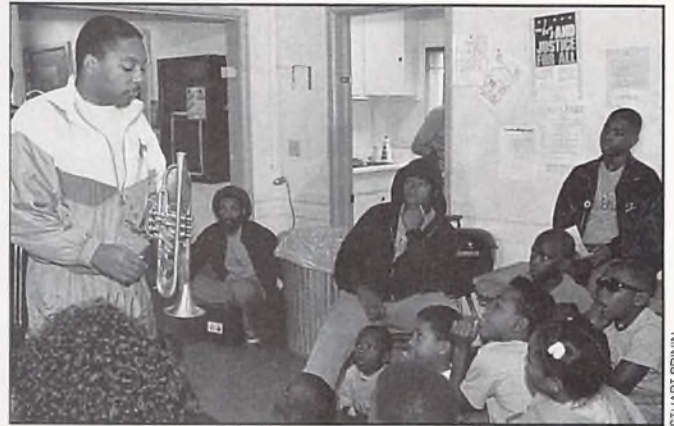
## SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

### as a leader

- GRIOT NEW YORK—Columbia (Jan. '93 release)  
 BLUE INTERLUDE—Columbia 48729  
 SOUL GESTURES IN SOUTHERN BLUE (Vol. I, Thick In The South; Vol. II, Uptown Ruler; Vol. III, Levee Low Moan)—Columbia 47975-7  
 STANDARD TIME VOLUME 2. INTIMACY CALLING—Columbia 47346  
 TUNE IN TOMORROW—Columbia 47044  
 STANDARD TIME VOLUME 3. THE RESOLUTION OF ROMANCE—Columbia 46143
- LUSH LIFE—Verve 314 511 779 (Joe Henderson)  
 YOU WON'T FORGET ME—Verve 847 482 (Shirley Horn)  
 MEMORIES OF LOUIS—Red Baron 48629 (Teresa Brewer)  
 PONTIUS PILATE'S DECISION—RCA/Novus 63134 (Dellaayo Marsalis)  
 THE BEAUTIFUL ONES ARE NOT YET BORN—Columbia 46990 (Branford Marsalis)  
 I HEARD YOU TWICE THE FIRST TIME—Columbia 46083 (Branford Marsalis)  
 AS SERENITY APPROACHES—RCA/Novus 63130 (Marcus Roberts)  
 DEEP IN THE SHED—RCA/Novus 3078 (Marcus Roberts)  
 THE PROPER ANGLE—CTI 79476 (Charles Fambrough)

### with various others

- LINCOLN CENTER JAZZ ORCHESTRA  
 PORTRAITS BY ELLINGTON—Columbia 53145



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# Sonny's Side Of The Street

SONNY ROLLINS

By John McDonough

“Is this going to be another negative, punch-Sonny-Rollins-in-the-eye article for *Down Beat*?” the man asked with weary resignation as he plopped into a den chair. “Well, I agreed to do it. I know how it’s going to come out anyway. So go ahead, ask me. I’m ready.”

It was a telephone interview. I imagined Sonny Rollins sitting there in his Hudson River Valley country home north of Rhinebeck, New York; sitting there in a nimbus of ennui waiting to be prodded and poked with an assortment of those unpleasant, blunt instruments we journalists call questions.

His wife Lucille had answered the phone and handed it to her husband. “This sure is going to be a mighty short interview,” she thought as she walked out the door, got into her car, and drove off on some mid-morning errands. Maybe she even pitied the poor schnook on the other end of the line a bit. She was surprised—actually “astonished,” she admitted later—to return in an hour and a half and find the conversation still pumping along and probing the merits of cowboy actor Ken Maynard, “B” westerns, and actress Joan Leslie.

How Sonny Rollins got from *Down Beat* to Joan Leslie within 90 minutes is the subject of this modest tale at hand. He took the scenic route, by and large, along the little roads of conversation not always traveled in music interviews. The kind that demand a little improvisation. But Rollins knows about that, doesn’t he? The talk avoided the long and familiar chronological expressways that wind past more than 40 years of various “sabbaticals,” crises, triumphs, and what have you. All that’s been well mapped in insightful essays by such



RON HEARD

career cartographers as Gary Giddins, Francis Davis, Bob Blumenthal (in his booklet accompanying the new seven-CD Prestige set, *The Complete Prestige Recordings*—see p. 45), and Charles Blanca in his book, *Sonny Rollins: The Journey Of A Jazzman*.

So, the assumption in this article will be that no reader needs to be instructed on any of this; or on Rollins’ immensity and influence as a tenor saxophonist, an influence that may in the aggregate dwarf that of his one-time contemporary, the late John Coltrane. With all this as given, then, back to *Down Beat*.

“I find it petty,” he groused on. “I find the things it says about great musicians petty. It tries to denigrate people with these John Simon-type reviews. I guess that’s what pays off, though. Writers have to write this type of piece to become famous. I know that’s the way it goes. I also know you won’t print any of this.” [Thus insuring that every word would get printed. Rollins is no media amateur.]

In the ‘20s, I reminded him, H. L. Mencken liked to say of his fellow journalists that it was their duty “to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable.” To which Rollins replied that no jazz musician is ever comfortable.

“There are those celebrities who are comfortable,” he admitted; “movie stars and rock musicians. But jazz musicians are not movie stars. Knowing what it takes to play jazz, and live the jazz life, I would disagree with any writer who assumed that the jazz musician in this society is comfortable, and thus fair game for attack. I know *Down Beat*’s been pretty hard on me recently, which I suppose is a kind of badge of honor. Maybe now that Miles is dead, they figure they have me to kick around. I’m not saying I’m beyond criticism. That’s not where I’m coming from. I’m my biggest critic. I know when I’m not sounding good before *Down Beat* or anyone else tells me so. But I object to *Down Beat* for what I’ve seen it do to other musicians.” He didn’t offer a bill of particulars; his wife, whom he met in 1956





HYOU VIELZ

product within a certain period. It was stricter in terms of what had to be done—three records a year, maybe. It was very high-profile. Paul Desmond was signed, too. But they took us both on our own terms. They didn't expect me to sell like Elvis Presley, and they didn't pay me like Presley, either. But there was no interference."

Rollins says he rarely gives much thought to his record sales or calculates ways to boost them. To him they are almost a peripheral concern, serving more a publicity than an income function. "I've been recording for many years and get certain royalties from my compositions and record sales," he explains. "But I couldn't live on that sum. Most of my income comes from live performances. If I break my arm or can't play, I'm out of luck. That's how close to the edge a jazz musician lives."

Happily Rollins gets princely concert fees, which he deserves and which help keep that "edge" rounded down to something more like a gently sloping hill. Although he won't discuss fees, he reportedly received more than \$20,000 for one 50-minute set at the recent Chicago Jazz Festival (see p. 62). Rollins knows his full value and doesn't quibble or give anything away. He would not consider, for instance, permitting National Public Radio to air his Chicago Jazz Festival appearance on the network. Yet, he is one of the relatively few jazz artists today who can maintain an active concert schedule within the United States. Most have to trot the globe to find a steady concert circuit. He plays almost no clubs anymore. And the preferred bookings are the ones where he doesn't have to share the bill, says wife Lucille.

and who still hates the word "gig," reads the articles and reviews, only occasionally passing one along to him. But then he said this:

"I think that the jazz business is fragile enough. It's a real art and it should be boosted. That's how I feel."

**A**h ha, now it was clear. Of course! That's exactly how he *should* feel. He's a jazz musician. Naturally he identifies with the world that has defined him. A more disinterested third person, however, might have looked at the two of us—musician and writer—and seen it another way. How little these writers often know about the reality of the world they cover, he might say; and how little musicians understand that writers have nothing if not their independence. They must resist the temptation to be liked by the famous subjects they hobnob with by becoming "boosters."

Whichever side you might favor in this gentlemen's disagreement, one fact is immutable: Rollins, like all the finest jazz artists,

will be remembered by his recordings, not his press clippings or reviews, in this magazine or any other. Through many label associations, he has always taken his recordings very seriously. Differences between labels? "Mainly whether they pay me my royalties," he said. "Some pay, some don't." Over the decades, he has worked with the most astute jazz producers in the industry—Bob Weinstock, Ira Gitler, Orrin Keepnews, Norman Granz, George Avakian, and Bob Thiele. In recent years, his wife has held that function. All have been astute enough to let him produce himself. "The creative decisions on arrangements and material were always mine. That's why I don't think whether the producer was George or Orrin was ever particularly material in terms of the final product. They may disagree, but that's the way I see it."

Even his 1962-'64 period with a major non-jazz label, RCA, presented no pressures to "expand his audience." "The contract at RCA," he said, "was a big contract at the time and called for a certain amount of

**A**lthough the albums he turns out every year and a half or so don't generate great cash windfalls, they keep his profile high in the marketplace. That, in turn, produces the awareness, the interest, and the personal-appearance bookings that generate the real money. In this, he is no different than any other aging music legend. Neither Frank Sinatra nor the Rolling Stones have been able to generate important record sales lately; Sinatra seems to have given up, in fact. Yet, on the road they mint money. On the jazz world's smaller fiscal scale, the same is true of Rollins. "You have to record to stay famous, to keep your name out there," he says. "Albums are more a publicity thing in a lot of ways."

They're also a record of his musical career. And history—and his place in it—is something he's keenly alert to. Maybe this is why he is said to have such mixed feelings about the whole recording process. If it's not my best, I don't want it preserved, seems to be the standing policy. That way there's no danger of anything slipping out.

When something does, Rollins is not a happy man. A French RCA collection of alternate takes from the '60s, for instance, came out this year on a Bluebird CD (*Alternatives*—see p. 46). Orrin Keepnews' album notes will provide the details for anyone who wishes to inquire. But they are of little consolation to Rollins.

"I feel it's an invasion of my prerogative to decide how I want to be represented on records," he said. "I used to go ballistic over these things. Now I realize it's done a lot. All kinds of performances are subject to this sort of thing [including radio broadcasts]. But if I don't like the way I sound, I don't want the world to hear it more than once. It's an issue of privacy almost." It's also something that only the most important musicians experience, artists whose work is considered so vital that even the scraps have value. It's the ultimate honor. "I understand that," he says. "But I'm a musician. Music is my living. I have to control the product I produce."

If Rollins is conscious of history, he still finds it hard to see himself as an historical figure. Most of the leading young players of jazz today never knew a world in which Sonny Rollins was not a star—just as Rollins never knew a world in which Armstrong or Ellington were not stars. In their eyes, Rollins is Ellington. "Yes," he grants, "but it's impossible for me to look at myself as these young people might. I think of myself as I always have. The good thing is that when I play somewhere I don't have to fight for acceptance. The bad part is I have to produce at a standard I set for myself 30 or 40 years ago. You can't go stink up the joint just because you're supposed to be great. But I can't be sucked in by the fact that some people may think I'm an icon. That would be as ridiculous as taking all the bad things writers write seriously. My own assessments are the most important. They're also the harshest; but that's for me to live with."

Still, when Rollins plays "Oleo" or "St. Thomas" and hears that wave of recognition roll across an audience, he feels good about it. "I want to communicate, even though I basically play for myself," he admits. "When I can reach an audience, I feel as if I've persuaded them to come into my camp and accept what I am. You have to be careful not to let that tempt you either to phone in a performance or to become solicitous of the crowd. That's why I stopped playing at one time. The pressure I felt from the audience made me want to do something for them I wasn't able to do."

If an audience doesn't recognize one of Rollins' own pieces, such as "Oleo," they'll certainly recognize familiar melodies like "Tennessee Waltz," which he turned into an aria at this year's Chicago Jazz Festival. No

jazz musician, of course, plays such an unexpected repertoire. The hippest in his audiences, who can't resist sneering at Irving Berlin, has always preferred to regard this Rollins trademark as part of some imagined sardonic side to his personality. They think he's kidding. But the joke's on them. He seems almost offended when someone refers to pieces like "There's No Business Like Show Business" or "I'm An Old Cowhand" as corn. He certainly never condescends to them in performance. These

*"Maybe now that Miles is dead, they figure they have me to kick around. I'm not saying I'm beyond criticism. . . . I know [if my playing isn't] sounding good before Down Beat or anyone else tells me."*



songs are rooted in memories of his childhood, in some cases. Maybe he even remembers Benny Goodman and Gene Krupa's "The Last Roundup," circa 1935. In any case, he can bring a child's excitement and straightforwardness to them.

Rollins gives the impression of being a pessimist. Sometimes it's more than an impression. When he speaks of the world's future, it's often with a conditional "if." He seems discouraged by the state of the environment, the government, the media.

"I'm concerned about the state of the world," he says grimly, "but I'm also too sophisticated to read newspapers or watch TV and think I'm being seriously informed." He recommends Bill McKibbin's recent book, *The Age Of Missing Information*, to friends. It puts everything in perspective, he says. "Things are happening that nobody is seeing. Don't miss it."

So he retreats to the things he trusts most: his home, his family, his friends. And, oh yes, his old movies. There's a wonderfully healthy innocence in this passionate affection he holds for "the stuff that dreams are made of." "They're the best thing on TV," he insists. "They're television's one redeeming virtue." At home he's probably more likely to leaf through a movie book or watch a film than listen to music. His video shelf, like his repertoire, is packed with the greats: John Huston's *The Maltese Falcon*, Marlene Dietrich in Sternberg's *The Blue Angel*, Humphrey Bogart in *Casablanca*, and W.C. Fields' *The Bank Dick*.

"I like those older black & white ones particularly," he confesses. "In fact, the ones I really look for are the B-pictures, especially westerns. I grew up on guys like Ken Maynard, Hoot Gibson, Buck Jones, Bob Steele, and Johnnie Mack Brown.

"There're a few musicals I've been trying to find, too. I'd love to get *The Sky's The Limit*. That's the one in which [Fred] Astaire introduced 'My Shining Hour' and 'One For My Baby' in 1942—a great Harold Arlen score. Joan Leslie was the young ingenue at the time. She was beautiful."

The interview had been going on about 80 minutes by the time we got to Ken Maynard and Joan Leslie. Lucille Rollins was back from her errands by now, and it seemed we'd covered enough. "Should I have my wife read this when it comes out?" he said. "Or should we just pretend it never happened?"

I was noncommittal. But if anyone can get Sonny Rollins a copy of *The Sky's The Limit*, let him know. And when you do, tell him **Down Beat** asked you to do it. **DB**

## EQUIPMENT

Sonny Rollins continues to use a Selmer Mark VI tenor saxophone, 1962 vintage, and a medium La Voz reed as his principle musical artillery. He owns three Mark VI's, plus a Yamaha straight silver soprano saxophone, which he plays occasionally. On the periphery, Rollins also has a Yanagisawa soprano, the last stop in the saxophone family

before crossing the border into clarinet territory. He rarely plays it publicly these days.

Although Rollins studied clarinet with Eddie Barefield, knows the rudiments of the Boehm system, and owns "an old Buffet," he has never added it to his official repertoire of instruments.

## SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

For a more complete listing, refer to **DB** July '88.  
*THE COMPLETE PRESTIGE RECORDINGS*—Prestige  
 7PCD-4407-2  
*HERE'S TO THE PEOPLE*—Milestone 9194  
*FALLING IN LOVE WITH JAZZ*—Milestone 9179  
*THE SOLO ALBUM*—Milestone 9137  
*SUNNY DAYS, STARRY NIGHTS*—Milestone 9122  
*ALTERNATIVES*—RCA/Bluebird 61124-2

*ALL THE THINGS YOU ARE*—RCA/Bluebird 2179  
*THE QUARTETS FEATURING JIM HALL*—RCA/Bluebird  
 5643  
*A NIGHT AT THE VILLAGE VANGUARD VOLS 1 & 2*—  
 Blue Note 46517, 46518  
*EAST BROADWAY R/INDOWN*—MCA/Impulse! 33120  
**with Thelonious Monk**  
*BRILLIANT CORNERS*—Riverside OJC-026

# DOWN BEAT's 57th Annual Readers Poll

## MAYNARD FERGUSON ELECTED TO HALL OF FAME



### HALL OF FAME

138	Maynard Ferguson	90	Joe Henderson
120	Gerry Mulligan	87	Elvin Jones
117	Dave Brubeck	81	Wayne Shorter
102	J.J. Johnson	81	McCoy Tyner
99	Stuff Smith	72	Horace Silver
96	Toots Thielemans		

Kenton. Then he began fronting units under his name.

The trumpeter, who also plays a number of other brass instruments with more than passing proficiency, quickly established himself as a high-note specialist. But if you pay more than cursory attention to his solos from his early years, as well as more recent efforts, you'll hear a man who, while certainly not a hard-bopper in the Lee Morgan-Clifford Brown mold, could, and can, deliver a very swinging improvised statement. As critic John S. Wilson wrote in *The New York Times*, describing Ferguson's performance at the Kool Jazz Festival in New York in 1984: "Even when he rose to some customary squeals, it was done with such rhythmic and melodic grace that he seemed to be dancing on the squealing."

Ferguson as a bandleader has also almost always kept foot-tapping, rhythmically persuasive material in his book, whether it be the hard-charging arrangements by Slide Hampton and Bill Holman for his late '50s and early '60s bands, or his present affection for bebop with Big Bop Nouveau. Even the *Rocky* era of the late '70s and early '80s was not without its esthetic strengths. Tabackin, who played with Ferguson during the mid-'60s, was a member of another transition band. "He was going into rock, but he did it interestingly. It was a good band," says the saxophonist known for his keen taste in acoustic-based jazz.

Known to have sampled psychedelic drugs with LSD champion Timothy Leary at the latter's upstate New York retreat in the '60s, Ferguson is also reputed to have a healthy appetite for champagne. For many decades, he's had a spiritual tie with India, first through his relationship with the noted teacher and philosopher J. Krishnamurti, and, more recently, with his guru, Sai Baba.

Ferguson, a man who looks forward and not back, is indefatigable, maintaining an arduous road schedule that in 1992 took the band to Brazil and India, both for the first time, and to New Zealand, Australia, and, of course, Europe.

A three-time Grammy winner, Maynard Ferguson has no plans to slow down. "It's all thrilling me, especially the new places. I just hope I don't run out of energy."

—Zan Stewart

It's hard for a jazz fan to hear the name Maynard Ferguson and not have some kind of immediate response.

Many will think of the trumpeter's uncanny ability to play clear-ringing notes of such aural altitude they seem to be calling to us from the stratosphere. Others will remember the Canadian native's showy, strutting, pop-flavored treatments of "Gonna Fly Now"—the theme from the original *Rocky* film (which, as a single, hit #28 on the *Billboard* pop charts in 1977)—"MacArthur Park," or Joe Zawinul's "Birdland."

Still others will associate Ferguson with his various bands, from the swinging Kentonian-Basie-ish groups of the mid-to-late '50s to his current Big Bop Nouveau, ensembles which have served as spawning grounds for many of jazz's finest proponents. Among these are pianists Jaki Byard and Joe Zawinul; saxophonists Lew Tabackin, Wayne Shorter (an MF member for two months in 1959, just prior to his joining Art Blakey), Pepper Adams, and Frank Vicari; bassist Eddie Gomez; drummers Peter Erskine and Greg Bissonette; and trombonists Slide

Hampton and Jimmy Cleveland.

Then, of course, there's the 64-year-old's devotion to jazz education. One of the staunchest advocates of curriculums that emphasize the various facets of improvisational music, Ferguson has also been a tireless performer on high school and college campuses, where he conducts clinics as well as concerts about five months a year. He cites education as holding the key to jazz's future, both in terms of musical talent, and a prospective audience, and says that it is substantially responsible for his considerable appeal.

"There are so many young people involved now who are upleveling the music," he says. "My current band is made up of players in their 20s, and many have master's degrees. That wouldn't have happened in the past."

By any standards, Ferguson, the 78th member of *Down Beat's* Hall of Fame, has had a musically rich career. Born in Montreal, he came to the U.S. in the late '40s and was heard with bands led by Boyd Raeburn, Charlie Barnet, and, from 1950 to '56, Stan

# JOE HENDERSON'S YEAR

## JAZZ ALBUM OF THE YEAR

- 306 **Lush Life**, Joe Henderson (Verve)  
 150 *People Time*, Stan Getz and Kenny Barron (Verve)  
 114 *Manhattan Man*, Michal Urbaniak (Milan)  
 52 *Ask The Ages*, Sonny Sharrock (Axiom)  
 42 *Doo Bop*, Miles Davis (Warner Bros.)  
 36 *The Spirits Of Our Ancestors*, Randy Weston (Antilles)  
 32 *Blu Blu Blu*, Muhal Richard Abrams (Black Saint)  
 32 *Aroyo*, Chico Hamilton (Soul Note)  
 32 *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, Branford Marsalis (Columbia)

*On the heels of Joe Henderson's triple-crown win in DB's 40th annual Critics Poll, the readers have seconded that opinion, awarding him top honors in the Tenor Sax and Jazz Album categories, and naming him Jazz Musician of the Year.*

## JAZZ MUSICIAN OF THE YEAR

- 342 **Joe Henderson**  
 180 David Murray  
 157 Branford Marsalis  
 138 Wynton Marsalis  
 130 Michal Urbaniak  
 68 Dizzy Gillespie  
 55 Red Rodney  
 38 John Scofield

## TENOR SAX

- 580 **Joe Henderson**  
 317 David Murray  
 310 Sonny Rollins  
 207 Joe Lovano  
 205 Branford Marsalis  
 123 Wayne Shorter  
 58 Scott Hamilton  
 55 Michael Brecker  
 52 Johnny Griffin



HYOU WELZ



## WORLD BEAT ALBUM OF THE YEAR

- 256 **Planet Drum**, Mickey Hart (Rykodisc)  
 211 *World Sinfonia*, Al DiMeola (Tomato)  
 43 *Pieces Of Africa*, Kronos Quartet (Elektra/Nonesuch)  
 43 *Baayo*, Baaba Maal (Mango)

## BLUES/SOUL/R&B MUSICIAN OF THE YEAR

- 225 **Prince**  
 216 Buddy Guy  
 204 B. B. King  
 159 Ray Charles  
 78 John Lee Hooker  
 54 Maceo Parker  
 45 James Brown  
 45 Albert Collins

## WORLD BEAT MUSICIAN OF THE YEAR

- 148 **Tito Puente**  
 86 Milton Nascimento  
 63 Micky Hart  
 55 Triok Gurtu  
 26 Salif Keita



## BLUES/SOUL/R&B ALBUM OF THE YEAR

- 237 **Damn Right I Got The Blues**, Buddy Guy (Silvertone)  
 198 *Diamonds & Pearls*, Prince (Paisley Park/Warner Bros.)  
 60 *The Sky Is Crying*, Stevie Ray Vaughan (Epic)  
 57 *Mr. Lucky*, John Lee Hooker (Point Blank/Charisma)  
 48 *Warm Your Heart*, Aaron Neville (A & M)  
 45 *Live At The Apollo*, B.B. King (GRP)  
 45 *Apocalypse '91*, Public Enemy (Def Jam/Columbia)

## POP/ROCK MUSICIAN OF THE YEAR

- 225 **Sting**  
 114 Prince  
 114 Bonnie Raitt  
 99 Neil Young  
 75 Paul Simon  
 54 Van Morrison  
 48 Carlos Santana  
 47 Eric Clapton



## POP/ROCK ALBUM OF THE YEAR

- 224 **Luck Of The Draw**, Bonnie Raitt (Capitol)  
 136 *Achtung Baby*, U2 (Island)  
 116 *Arc/Weld*, Neil Young (Reprise)  
 99 *Diamonds & Pearls*, Prince (Paisley Park/Warner Bros.)  
 52 *Blood Sugar Sex Magik*, Red Hot Chili Peppers (Warner Bros.)

## JAZZ ELECTRIC COMBO

- 319 **John Scofield**  
 291 Chick Corea Elektric Band  
 291 Pat Metheny  
 270 Ornette Coleman & Prime Time  
 213 Michal Urbaniak  
 189 Yellowjackets  
 175 Bill Frisell  
 88 Chico Hamilton  
 60 Bela Fleck & the Flecktones  
 60 John Zorn & Naked City  
 53 Sonny Sharrock

## JAZZ ACOUSTIC COMBO

- 312 **Wynton Marsalis**  
 189 Branford Marsalis  
 183 Phil Woods  
 180 Keith Jarrett  
 120 Harper Brothers  
 93 Red Rodney  
 90 World Saxophone Quartet  
 81 Art Ensemble of Chicago  
 75 Bobby Watson & Horizon  
 72 Tony Williams  
 69 Randy Weston  
 54 Chick Corea Akoustic Band  
 51 Steve Lacy  
 48 Roy Hargrove  
 45 Dirty Dozen Brass Band  
 45 David Murray



JUDITH SCHILLER

JAZZ BIG BAND

- 567 **Count Basie Band**
- 301 Sun Ra
- 266 David Murray
- 231 Charlie Haden
- 168 Carla Bley
- 133 Muhal Richard Abrams
- 126 Abstract Truth
- 98 GRP All-Star Band
- 80 Akiyoshi/Tabackin
- 53 Rob McConnell



COMPOSER

- 216 **Muhal Richard Abrams**
- 216 **Carla Bley**
- 147 Benny Carter
- 126 Henry Threadgill
- 119 Randy Weston
- 118 David Murray
- 99 Wynton Marsalis
- 84 John Vanore
- 75 Michal Urbaniak
- 75 Bobby Watson
- 60 Anthony Braxton

POP/ROCK GROUP

- 212 **U2**
- 152 Grateful Dead
- 128 Los Lobos
- 121 Living Colour
- 103 Red Hot Chili Peppers
- 79 Prince/NPG
- 64 Little Village

BLUES/SOUL/R&B GROUP

- 332 **Neville Brothers**
- 224 Prince/NPG
- 156 B. B. King
- 124 Kinsey Report
- 84 Robert Cray
- 68 Albert Collins
- 64 Dirty Dozen Brass Band
- 64 Maceo Parker
- 60 Ray Charles

WORLD BEAT GROUP

- 138 **Tito Puente**
- 97 Ladysmith Black Mambazo
- 69 Kronos Quartet
- 50 Jerry Gonzalez & the Fort Apache Band
- 47 Olodum
- 33 Ai Di Meola's World Sinfonia

ARRANGER

- 336 **Carla Bley**
- 180 Benny Carter
- 153 Frank Foster
- 132 Muhal Richard Abrams
- 93 Sun Ra
- 93 Henry Threadgill
- 84 Toshiko Akiyoshi
- 63 John Zorn
- 54 Quincy Jones
- 54 Butch Morris
- 51 Bob Mintzer

TRUMPET

- 764 **Wynton Marsalis**
- 396 Lester Bowie
- 361 Tom Harrell
- 290 Wallace Roney
- 278 Roy Hargrove
- 204 Dizzy Gillespie
- 143 Red Rodney
- 132 Clark Terry
- 68 Maynard Ferguson
- 61 Don Cherry



TROMBONE

- 394 **J.J. Johnson**
- 301 Ray Anderson
- 248 Steve Turre
- 118 Robin Eubanks
- 76 Craig Harris
- 51 Curtis Fuller
- 48 Bill Watrous
- 39 Slide Hampton

FLUTE

- 318 **James Newton**
- 273 James Moody
- 121 Lew Tabackin
- 99 Dave Valentin
- 86 Frank Wess
- 55 Kent Jordon
- 55 Henry Threadgill
- 37 Jeremy Steig
- 32 Hubert Laws
- 30 Buddy Collette

CLARINET

- 504 **Eddie Daniels**
- 373 Don Byron
- 140 Buddy DeFranco
- 69 Phil Woods
- 61 Alvin Batiste
- 48 Buddy Collette
- 38 Paquito D'Rivera
- 35 Dr. Michael White

SOPRANO SAX

- 471 **Steve Lacy**
- 442 Branford Marsalis
- 334 Wayne Shorter
- 95 Dave Liebman
- 66 Bob Wilber
- 51 Jane Ira Bloom
- 36 Courtney Pine
- 31 Jane Bunnett
- 31 Eric Person



ALTO SAX

- 515 **Phil Woods**
- 290 Bobby Watson
- 213 Ornette Coleman
- 145 Jackie McLean
- 100 Kenny Garrett
- 95 Arthur Blythe
- 78 Benny Carter
- 63 Christopher Hollyday
- 48 Lee Konitz

BARITONE SAX

- 507 **Gerry Mulligan**
- 247 Hamiet Bluiett
- 177 Nick Brignola
- 57 Ronnie Cuber
- 56 John Surman
- 30 Cecil Payne



ACOUSTIC PIANO

- 297 **Kenny Barron**
- 252 McCoy Tyner
- 195 Keith Jarrett
- 180 Oscar Peterson
- 137 Geri Allen
- 135 Tommy Flanagan
- 113 Marcus Roberts
- 100 Cecil Taylor
- 81 Don Pullen
- 70 Hank Jones
- 59 Chick Corea
- 59 Kenny Kirkland
- 59 Gonzalo Rubalcaba
- 55 Benny Green
- 55 Herbie Hancock
- 43 Andrew Hill



ORGAN

- 448 **Jimmy Smith**
- 266 Don Pullen
- 216 Joey DeFrancesco
- 172 Sun Ra
- 110 Barbara Dennerlein
- 86 Jimmy McGriff
- 44 Jack McDuff
- 38 Charles Earland
- 30 Carla Bley

SYNTHESIZER

- 356 **Joe Zawinul**
- 308 Sun Ra
- 230 Chick Corea
- 150 Herbie Hancock
- 92 Lyle Mays
- 66 Wayne Horvitz

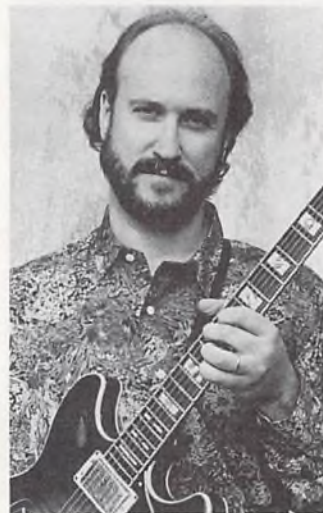
## ACOUSTIC GUITAR

- 404 **John McLaughlin**
- 235 Jim Hall
- 188 Joe Pass
- 101 Kenny Burrell
- 96 Kevin Eubanks
- 78 Ralph Towner
- 60 Al DiMeola
- 55 Pat Metheny
- 39 Fared Haque
- 32 Earl Klugh
- 30 Egberto Gismonti



## FEMALE SINGER

- 369 **Betty Carter**
- 270 Abbey Lincoln
- 264 Shirley Horn
- 150 Cassandra Wilson
- 117 Carmen McRae
- 115 Ella Fitzgerald
- 105 Ursula Dudziak
- 105 Diane Schuur
- 78 Sheila Jordan
- 75 Dianne Reeves
- 51 Anita Baker



## DRUMS

- 387 **Jack DeJohnette**
- 351 Max Roach
- 225 Tony Williams
- 207 Elvin Jones
- 153 Billy Higgins
- 141 Jeff Watts
- 129 Chico Hamilton
- 90 Louie Bellson
- 90 Victor Lewis
- 81 Marvin "Smitty" Smith
- 81 Lenny White
- 72 Roy Haynes
- 66 Ralph Peterson, Jr.
- 63 Ed Blackwell
- 60 Joey Baron



## PERCUSSION

- 429 **Airto**
- 417 Tito Puente
- 309 Trilok Gurtu
- 288 Naná Vasconcelos
- 195 Famoudou Don Moye
- 81 Jerry Gonzalez
- 78 Don Alias
- 63 Poncho Sanchez

## MISCELLANEOUS INSTRUMENT

- 454 **Toots Thielemans**  
(harmonica)
- 183 David Murray (bass clarinet)
- 152 Bob Stewart (tuba)
- 60 Howard Johnson (tuba)
- 46 Michael Brecker (EWI)
- 42 Bela Fleck (banjo)
- 39 Hank Roberts (cello)
- 31 Andy Narell (steel pans)

## MALE SINGER

- 406 **Joe Williams**
- 270 Bobby McFerrin
- 219 Mel Tormé
- 118 Mark Murphy
- 62 Harry Connick, Jr.
- 42 Jon Hendricks
- 34 Frank Sinatra
- 31 Al Jarreau
- 30 Tony Bennett

## ELECTRIC GUITAR

- 386 **John Scofield**
- 259 Pat Metheny
- 236 Bill Frisell
- 141 Kevin Eubanks
- 99 Kenny Burrell
- 92 Jim Hall
- 87 Sonny Sharrock
- 48 Al DiMeola
- 44 Mark Whitfield
- 40 Mike Stern
- 35 John McLaughlin
- 33 Stanley Jordan



## ACOUSTIC BASS

- 395 **Charlie Haden**
- 170 Ray Brown
- 140 Ron Carter
- 44 Anthony Cox
- 41 Christian McBride
- 39 Charnett Moffett
- 36 Milt Hinton
- 35 Rufus Reid
- 34 Fred Hopkins
- 25 Cecil McBee
- 22 Ray Drummond



## ELECTRIC BASS

- 483 **Steve Swallow**
- 280 John Patitucci
- 205 Marcus Miller
- 123 Stanley Clarke
- 123 Bob Cranshaw
- 48 Bill Laswell
- 47 Kenny Davis
- 38 Jamaaladeen Tacuma

## VIBES

- 520 **Milt Jackson**
- 380 Gary Burton
- 240 Bobby Hutcherson
- 103 Steve Nelson
- 101 Lionel Hampton
- 48 Jay Hoggard

## VIOLIN

- 516 **Stéphane Grappelli**
- 210 Billy Bang
- 136 Jean Luc Ponty
- 118 Michal Urbaniak
- 111 John Blake
- 48 Leroy Jenkins
- 40 Mark Feldman
- 32 Johnny Frigo

## VOCAL GROUP

- 639 **Take 6**
- 495 Manhattan Transfer
- 144 New York Voices
- 126 Hendricks Family
- 75 Jackie & Roy
- 69 Sweet Honey in the Rock

# B-3 Rebopper

**JOEY DeFRANCESCO**

By Robert Baranello

*"I play hard-core, straightahead jazz. But I want the audience to be involved . . . I talk to my audience. I try to let them know what I'm doing."*



DENSALIX/FILM

The year is 1987 and a local Philadelphia television talk show called *Time Out* has booked Miles Davis for an interview. Although Davis has not agreed to play his horn, the producer is aware that the event is a special one and hires an ensemble of 16-year-old high school musicians to play the cues and during commercials.

Coming back on air after a break, the bandleader, who has just taken a solo on a Hammond B-3 organ, winds the band down to an abrupt halt. The interviewer, who has undoubtedly done his homework, asks Davis a question about jazz. Davis ignores him. "Man! What is that organ player's name?" The interviewer is thrown off balance. The organ player is welded to his bench. "Uh . . . um . . . that's Joey DeFranco!" replies the interviewer, not having done *all* his homework. The organ player's name, in fact, is Joey DeFrancesco.

DeFrancesco is now 21, with four albums to his credit, including his latest, *Reboppin'*. As a result of his very brief tenure as a house bandleader, he also, at the age of 17, toured and recorded with the late Miles Davis. His greatest credit, however, is as jazz's most ardent champion in the renaissance of the organ as a lead instrument (see DB June '91).

By the mid-'70s, with the advent of

keyboard synthesizers, which were both lightweight and could simulate (but never truly duplicate) the sound of the Hammond B-3 model, the unwavering voices of keyboard boppers like Jimmy Smith, Jack McDuff, Groove Holmes, and Jimmy McGriff began to wither beneath a shadow of threatened obsolescence. By 1985, the Hammond company had gone out of business, although Hammond Suzuki Musical Instruments of Japan successfully reentered the U.S. market in '89. "When I released my first album [*All Of Me*], the organ had kind of died down," said DeFrancesco. "The older guys still played it, and played it great, but there was nobody fresh playing it. When I came out—younger, on a major label, and able to reach a wide audience as far as airplay and distribution—it kind of helped bring it back. I'm happy for that. I mean, at one point last year there were *four* organ albums on the *Billboard* chart. That hasn't been like that since the '60s!"

Playing at tempi which render the fingers a blur, and employing a technical accuracy which has yet to sacrifice speed, spirit, or swing, DeFrancesco is a hard-bop wunderkind as dedicated to his instrument as any mama lion is to her cubs. It all started when he was four years old. His father, "Papa" John DeFrancesco, a railroad electrician and part-time musician who played the Phila-

delphia club circuit, brought home his Hammond B-3 during a sabbatical from his club schedule. "I was immediately attracted to it," he said. "So, my dad, he put me up on it. The first impression I got was the two [keyboard] manuals and the foot pedals. I mean, I was playing on a toy piano, so it looked *huge!* Then when I saw that Leslie spinning, I mean, I was a *kid*, so I wanted to know everything about it." (DeFrancesco's curiosity regarding the inner workings of his instrument would last, and later come to fruition when he became a design consultant for the Hammond company.)

Having his father's record collection at his fingertips, the young DeFrancesco let the sounds of Smith, Holmes, and McDuff fan the flames of his passion. "I remember really focusing on Jimmy Smith's 'The Sermon,'" DeFrancesco recalled. "I took six months, and, without telling anybody, I memorized the whole thing. I was five years old. My dad came home from work one day when I was playing it. I thought he was gonna pass out."

Although DeFrancesco pays considerable homage to all the forefathers of his instrument, his musical compass is always directing him toward things progressive and innovative. "These days people say 'the young lions' and all that. But every decade there is a bounty of young lions. In the '40s you had Miles playing with Charlie Parker—19

years old! You had Red Rodney, he was a kid. But what you've got to remember is when those young cats were playing, back in the '30s and '40s, they were inventing that shit. Now we come into this day and age and we've got about a million records we can listen to. I mean, who was Bird gonna listen to to learn how to play like he played?

"Now with this new string of young musicians," said DeFrancesco, "myself, Roy Hargrove, Wynton and the whole Marsalis family, I'll speak for myself and say I try to get the audience more involved with what I do. I play hard-core, straightahead jazz, but I want the audience to be involved. Years ago, there were a lot of fans for bebop. But basically, the cats who were playing played more for themselves, for the musician. I talk to my audience. I try to let them know what I'm doing rather than just focus on what other musicians think. To have some showmanship. That's all part of it."

**T**he Hammond B-3 is what DeFrancesco has in common with all his predecessors. It's been the irreplaceable mainstay. Roughly the size of a jumbo roll-top desk and weighing in at 425 pounds



Joey offers a helping hand to "Papa" John DeFrancesco during a recent jam session.

(not including the Leslie speaker cabinet, a critical accessory), players have been faced with the perpetual dilemma of transporting it to and from gigs. Consequently, DeFrancesco manned the drawing board with Hammond's head designer, Steve Kaklor, and conjured up the new XB5.

"It's what we've all been waiting for," said DeFrancesco. "There have been so many attempts to make something that sounds like a B-3, but they could never do it. This has all the characteristics of the B-3, but it's MIDI, too. Because all B-3s are hand-made, they all sound different. So, you can tweak the XB5 to make it sound like the one you own. Everybody knows that I have to have a B-3 to get my sound. So, I really emphasized to Steve that it had to have all the B-3 characteristics. Like the little click when you hit the keys and the harmonic overtones. And the amazing thing is it only weighs 60 pounds!" (DeFrancesco debuted the XB5 last August at the International Art of Jazz Festival in Islip, N.Y.)

There is one aspect to the changing zeitgeist of jazz with which DeFrancesco is not so comfortable: The homogenization of jazz with generic pop stylings. "People are being fooled, big-time, that this stuff is jazz," said an emphatic DeFrancesco. "Like Kenny G. I say, 'God bless him.' I have admiration for anyone who makes a success of himself. But he is not 'jazz-man of the decade,' as he was voted by some award. I mean, Kenny G makes good music, but it's not jazz. Don't call it jazz. Call it something else. The tragedy is that people are under such a big misconception. I mean, a lot of it has to do with promotion. If you hear something every 10 seconds, people *have* to like it. If they played some straightahead shit out of 30 different radio stations every second of the day, people would say, 'Man, this is happening,' and jazz would be the Top 40. And, in my opinion, the world would be a much better place."

Jazz has made DeFrancesco's world a better place partly through the presence of Miles Davis, a key influence in his musical career. "I was only able to tour with Miles for four months because my album was coming out and I had to do promotional things for that. But Miles and I remained great friends and continued to do things together. He'd call me at three in the morning and say [*does a Miles impression*], 'Hey, man, what'dya think a this chord?' Then he'd play something over the phone. I remember one night I called him, and I said, 'Hey Miles, I played with Dizzy last night.' He said, 'Man, Diz knows everything.' Then he said, 'Dizzy is to me like I am to you.' I mean, that blew my mind."

It was Davis' influence which prompted DeFrancesco to learn trumpet, which he plays in performance usually while seated at

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the organ, playing bass on the foot pedals and chords with the left hand. (During his recording sessions, his trumpet lines are the only overdubs on his recordings.) DeFrancesco's cool, muted-trumpet playing on John Coltrane's "Naima" (from *Rebop*) reflects a mirrored warmth for his former friend and mentor. "I started playing trumpet about a year after I left Miles," he reflected. "I went to see him one night, and I told him I'd been playing trumpet, and he hands me his horn and says, 'Then play something!' So I played one of his licks, and he went 'WHAAAT!? You sound like me!' Then I went to see him a couple of months later, and he asked me if I was still practicing. I played for him some more and he gave me one of his mouthpieces. It was funny, because it was perfect for me."

DeFrancesco's love affair with the organ, however, is one that knows no limits. "When I first heard it at the age of four," said DeFrancesco, "I knew that I wanted to play it, that I wanted to master it, to know everything about it. A lot of guys who played the organ before say to me, 'Man, you really brought that back,' and I'm happy about that."

"Jimmy Smith was an incredible influence on me," DeFrancesco continued. "I still set the organ the same way he does. I tried different sounds, but as far as tone quality goes, that's the best sound for me. Jimmy feels I get more recognition than he does, and that hurts me. It really does. But it's not true. Everybody knows who Jimmy Smith is. I mean, people say, 'You're the cat now, but some 11-year-old is gonna come along and whip your ass!' Well, then I'll embrace him. Him or her. I'll embrace them, because that's exactly the thing we need. That's the kind of cat I am."

DB

## EQUIPMENT

Although during the past 17 years Joey has performed and recorded using the Hammond B-3 organ (he owns 12 models dating back to the 1940's), he currently uses the new Hammond XB5, a lightweight, MIDI compatible version of the B-3 which he helped to design. He connects the XB5 to either a Leslie 302 or 122XB speaker. For the B-3, he still relies on the original Leslie 122 speaker.

On trumpet, Joey uses a large bore, 1955 Martin Committee model with a Giardinelli mouthpiece given to him by Miles Davis.

## DISCOGRAPHY

### as a leader

*REBOPPIN*—Columbia 48624  
*PART III*—Columbia 47063  
*WHERE ARE YOU?*—Columbia 45443  
*ALL OF ME*—Columbia 44463

### with others

*WHY NOT?*—Muse 5433 (Houston Person)  
*STRAWBERRY MOON*—Columbia 40510 (Grover Washington, Jr.)  
*AMANDLA*—Warner Bros 25873 (Miles Davis)

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# Behind Every Singer Is A Piano Player

BETTY CARTER & JOHN HICKS

By Kevin Whitehead



**N**o arguments, please: Betty Carter is our greatest living jazz singer, and one of the music's top talent scouts. She's equally at home with her trio (currently, pianist Cyrus Chestnut, bassist Chris Thomas, and drummer Clarence Penn) or fronting a huge-cast spectacular at New York's Lincoln Center, as she did last March.

John Hicks served two stints as Carter's pianist, from 1966 to '68 and '75 to '80, and guests on her new *It's Not About The Melody*, for which she set words to his "Naima's Love Song." Their warm mutual regard was obvious as soon as Hicks arrived at Carter's Brooklyn home for our session, and immediately produced a photo album to show off

pictures of his grandchild. Thumbing through it, one also discovered photos of outcat Oliver Lake, who, like Hicks, hails from St. Louis; Kansas City blues titan Jay McShann; bop guitarist Peter Leitch; and young lion Marvin "Smitty" Smith—an odd assortment that underscores Hicks' versatility. (He's recorded with all of them.) Carter's antipathy for the avant garde notwithstanding, Hicks has made records with David Murray, Pharoah Sanders, Arthur Blythe, and Chico Freeman, as well as Hank Mobley and Art Blakey, whom he also worked for twice. Hicks' latest Novus album, *Friends Old And New*, finds him playing with veteran Clark Terry and new arrival Joshua Redman (see p. 40).

Reading this condensed transcript, you have to imagine the overlapping dialog, interjections of approval with which each would punctuate the other's verbal riffs, and frequent bouts of raucous laughter. Their conversation often took its own course, veering quickly away from the topics I suggested. But when old friends get together to talk, it's not about the questions.

**KEVIN WHITEHEAD:** *From a pianist's viewpoint, how is it different comping for singers and instrumentalists?*

**BETTY CARTER:** I don't know about that. The only thing I think is playing slow is harder than playing fast.

**JOHN HICKS:** You had to bring that up! I just had this rehearsal with a singer yesterday, where she said, "I'd like to do my ballad really slow." But when she got slow she was singing out of time, you dig? You want to sing slow, go ahead, but you still got a one there, and two, and three, and four. I said, "You can come in wherever you want, but there still is *one*."

**BC:** The beginning of the phrase.

**KW:** *John, do you think it's harder to play slow than fast?*

**JH:** I used to, but I don't think about that now, after working with a master. You think I didn't learn anything while I was hanging around her? [laughs]

**BC:** Some of the things I did then were very, very, very slow.

**JH:** It was great, though, because you learn how to breathe. I liked to breathe with her: when she takes a breath, I take one.

**BC:** That's what I tell my musicians: "C'mon, *breathe*. Open up the space in that solo. Take a deep breath. 'Cause the moment you take a breath you're going to think of something to deal with."

**JH:** You might even play the same note, but approach it another way.

**KW:** *Playing behind singers, is it hard resisting the temptation to fill in all the space they leave?*

**BC:** It's not resisting—it's when and how you do it. It's about taste.

**JH:** Right. What you don't play is just as important as what you play.

**BC:** Nobody sounds like John Hicks. When you hear a piano player, you know it's John Hicks, no doubt about it. You hear his way of phrasing, his way of attacking the piano. The energy is always there, no matter what kind of condition the piano is in. He's got things

he's gonna do to let you know 'This is John Hicks here.' [In the mid-'70s], I had started doing a lot of work, and I needed that energy, that fire underneath. When we got [bassist] Curtis Lundy and [drummer] Kenny Washington, that was the beginning of heaven. They'd swing all the time.

**KW:** Was Betty's Lincoln Center extravaganza the first you'd played together in awhile?

**JH:** Yeah.

**BC:** I wanted another trio [besides the two already picked, with pianists Geri Allen and Cyrus Chestnut], but the stage was too small and the budget was stretched. I had to have John there, so we got him to play with the big band. That concert was called "The Music Never Stops." I didn't want an intermission, and I have to thank [Jazz at Lincoln Center director] Rob Gibson; I'm sure that behind the scenes he had to talk the management into not having one. Routine is routine: Broadway plays, concerts, dances, they gotta have an intermission. But—why? If you have a set that's gonna keep people interested for a certain amount of time, why do they have to go out and smoke?

I knew I wasn't going to get a breather. But I'd already been connecting the music on my jobs, going from one song to another, singing introductions and everything in the middle. So the idea came to me, to do a show like that, with big band and strings and different trios for variety. Instead of just standing on stage for two hours, singing and singing and singing and singing and singing and singing.

**KW:** Is there a physical limit to how long you can sing?

**BC:** I don't know. One time I did a three-hour set with Winard Harper, Benny Green, and Michael Bowie. I didn't realize it until it was over, and Winard said, "You know we did three hours?"

**KW:** I'll bet the band noticed it was three hours.

**JH:** [bemused but emphatic] That's not necessarily true, that's not necessarily true. That's not necessarily true.

**BC:** Some musicians, especially the young ones, just want to play. They're not thinking about time.

**JH:** Let's face it, when you go home, you're not gonna practice anything hipper than what you're doing on the bandstand. And if you do, who cares?

**BC:** I did a job recently in Monte Carlo, where they paid us a whole lot of money to do one 30-minute workshop. Everybody was happy they got the money, but they was drug 'cuz they didn't get a chance to work. This was an educational program, but we could not give these students what we wanted to give them. I put the money in my pocket, but I really wanted to give more to the kids.

**JH:** I did a concert not long ago at NYU where the same thing happened. We had to



*"The energy is always there,  
no matter what kind of  
condition the piano is in.  
He's got things he's gonna do  
to let you know, 'This is  
John Hicks here.'"*

—Betty Carter

come off after an hour. The guy said, "I don't care what you do, but you're off the stage by 10:30, period." When we finished the set, the stagehands already had their coats on. I saw the people sitting there applauding, and knew they wanted an encore, and we couldn't do it. You don't want to leave people hanging. It's a drag for you, too, 'cause you don't get your message over.

I remember when Eddie Henderson was in Art Blakey's band, he'd imitate other trumpet players. Not to say he didn't have his own voice, but he'd play four or five choruses just like Freddie Hubbard. Then he'd go into some Lee Morgan. Finally Blakey cut him off, said [in *Bu's gravel voice*], "Next time you play a solo like that, play your own shit first." [laughs]

**KW:** One major difference between playing

with Blakey and Betty is that her arrangements are more flexible, more likely to change on instant notice.

**JH:** We used to work out a lot of stuff.

**BC:** A lot of it was laid out.

**JH:** There was always room to change stuff around. It was up to her.

**BC:** Go into different meters and stuff like that, and just do it as long as we wanted to.

**JH:** Sometimes we'd go backwards—start off in 7/4 or something and go back through 5/4 and 3/4, then back to 4/4. You have to be ready at a moment's notice. It's like you're a sprinter at the starting block; when the gun fires, you take off. You're primed to run. But when you get to the end of 100 meters, you may have to run another 100. Run 200 meters like you're running 100 meters, you just might break a record. [laughs]

**KW:** Betty, besides writing lots of tunes, you do songs by writers who aren't too well known. How do these songs find their way to you?

**BC:** It just happens. Like walking into a club where John was playing, and hearing "Naima's Love Song." It didn't take two or three hearings to turn me on to it—that was it. One time when Bobby Watson was working with you, I heard "The Love We Had Yesterday." I asked him about it, he said "My wife wrote it," and I said, "Okay, I want it." I heard Carlos Garnett singing his "Caribbean Sun" on the radio. I said, "I sure like the changes in that tune," and went and got it.

**KW:** Let me ask about two songs you've recorded twice: "By The Bend Of The River," by Clara Edwards . . .

**BC:** It's an old marching song I found when I was looking at a football game, and these guys were marching at halftime. [scats the melody in martial tempo—you shoulda been there]

**KW:** And Diane Cole's "All I've Got."

**BC:** I just liked the changes. I pick a tune because of its musical thing [sings an excerpt]. It's different, there's a whole lot of stuff going on. I found that back in the '50s. She was hanging out in the Brill Building in New York City, where all the writers hung out, and she gave me the chart. She wasn't famous or anything, just one of the songwriters who wanted me to do some of her songs. I don't know where she is, or even if she's alive.

**KW:** Looking at the credits to the reissued *I Can't Help It*, I was struck by how many women are represented: Diane Cole, Clara Edwards, arranger Melba Liston.

**BC:** I've heard more about that lately than we ever thought about then. People ask me, "Because you're a woman, did you pick their tunes?" But being a singer, I didn't have to compete with men. A piano player may have more problems being a woman than a singer would. A singer didn't have those problems.

**KW:** Betty, how do your trio arrangements

develop?

**BC:** I either figure them out myself, or ask for input in rehearsal. "How do you think this is gonna go? Do you think we should do this?" Try a whole lot of different ways of doing them.

**JH:** We used to do a lot of that here in this house. Sometimes we would find different meanings in a tune, by really sitting down and dealing with it. You'd heard it before, but it's like you never really got inside of what was happening with the music before. We did a lot of that.

**KW:** So when your piano player changes, there's a great difference in how a tune is played?

**BC:** Sure. 'Cause the piano player will have another approach.

**JH:** Different personalities. But one thing that I noticed from the guys who came after me is they had a little groundwork laid out for them from the double album we did [*The Audience* . . .]. I think that was one of their real points of departure.

**BC:** But I also let them know they can put their own input in there, make it their own. I want to hear something different, too.

**JH:** I'm sure they're all eternally thankful they didn't come on the gig and have somebody tell them, "You gotta play like him." "Thanks a lot." [laughs]

**KW:** How do you find musicians?

**BC:** Different ways. I've known Cyrus Chestnut about 10 years, since he was at Berklee; but the opportunity to use him never came up. Stephen Scott was recommended to me by Winard. Lewis Nash recommended Clarence Penn, and Clarence recommended Chris Thomas.

I was looking for a piano player when I found Benny Green, but I found him by accident. I went out to a bar in Jamaica with a friend of mine, and Benny was playing there. Later, I said to Khalid [Moss, pianist], "I heard this white boy out in Jamaica who sure sounds good." He said, "I betcha that was Benny Green." I don't know how he knew about him, but he knew. I called Benny Green up; he was there the next day! It's like he walked from the phone to my house! I opened the door, he went straight up to the piano and sat down, and that was it. He never got off the piano the whole four years he was with me.

**KW:** John, as someone who made his first record as a leader 12 years after moving to New York [Hells Bells, on *Strata-East*, recorded in 1975], does it seem odd to you that guys 18 or 19 are recording for major labels?

**JH:** I think there's a certain amount of irony in it.

**BC:** But today it's a different kind of setup. Everything has been condensed. We're dealing with instant food and instant other things, and sometimes it doesn't take as long as it used to for somebody to get across.



TERI BLOOM

*"Let's face it, when you go home you're not gonna practice anything hipper than what you're doing on the bandstand. And if you do, who cares?"*

—John Hicks



**JH:** This [young lions craze] is being played up a certain way now as far as the media goes, but Bud Powell and those guys were kicking ass when they were like 15, 16 years old. When I first saw Lee Morgan he was right out of high school, playing in Dizzy Gillespie's big band.

**BC:** I heard about what Ron Carter said on PBS about young kids, and that the older players should be recorded; but there *are* older players who are being recorded. Look at Benny Carter. And maybe these younger people are good. I mean you can't get a better drummer than Lewis Nash. You can't hardly get a better drummer than Gregory Hutchinson. Winard Harper is a good drummer. So let them be recorded.

**JH:** As they go down the road, as they live their life, we'll see who hangs in there.

**BC:** Or who will develop an attitude like some older bass players I know, who seem to be bitter 'cause some young people are moving ahead. [howling laughter] And I don't care if you print it. Certain older people think we owe them something. No one owes you anything. It's your job to do the job.

**JH:** You don't get drafted to do this gig. You volunteer.

**BC:** Right now, I'm getting involved with setting up a platform for young players to be held at the Majestic Theater in Brooklyn, at least once a year. The series is gonna be called *Jazz Ahead*. The first concert is April 17, and the organizers have given me the go-ahead to pick the young players. They'll have their own band, and do their little arrangements and stuff, and then I'll program it, 'cause I know what works on stage. That helps them to learn, 'cause a lot of people don't know how to do that.

**JH:** This is true. You can go for years, fumbling around up on the bandstand. DB

EQUIPMENT

John Hicks endorses Baldwin pianos, and has a Baldwin Concert Vertical at home, but doesn't object if he gets to the gig and finds a Steinway Hamburg D. Betty Carter says, "If my pipes need to loosen up before a gig, I might gargle with some honey and cider vinegar. I don't drink on the

stand. Some singers have a whole pitcher of water, and they drink after every single song. Maybe it's beneficial, but I haven't found that out yet. I know I don't want to burp on the stand, 'cause in Europe, most of the water is carbonated."

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

This list of recent issues and reissues updates the discographies accompanying previous *DB* features on Carter (Aug '89) and Hicks (June '86). For space reasons, Hicks' zillion dates as sideman have been omitted.

**Betty Carter with John Hicks**

IT'S NOT ABOUT THE MELODY—Verve 314 513 870  
THE AUDIENCE WITH BETTY CARTER—Verve 835 684  
NOW IT'S MY TURN—Roulette 5005 (LP, out of print)

**Betty Carter as leader**

BETTY CARTER—Verve 843 274  
DROPPIN' THINGS—Verve 843 991  
'ROUND MIDNIGHT—Roulette 95999  
FINALLY—Roulette 95333  
I CAN'T HELP IT—Impulse! 114

**John Hicks as leader**

CRAZY FOR YOU—Rec Baron 52761  
FRIENDS OLD AND NEW—Novus 63141  
POWER TRIO—Novus 3115 (co-led with Cecil McBee, Elvin Jones)  
LIVE AT MAYBECK RECITAL HALL, VOL. 7—Concord Jazz 4442  
RHYTHM-A-NING—Candid 79044 (co-led with Kenny Barron)  
EAST SIDE BLUES—DIW 828  
NAIMA'S LOVE SONG—DIW 823 (featuring Bobby Watson)  
TWO OF A KIND—Evidence 22017 (co-led with Ray Drummond)  
LUMINOUS—Evidence 22033 (co-led with Elise Wood)  
I'LL GIVE YOU SOMETHING TO REMEMBER ME BY—Limetree 023

# Key

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



## Charles Brown

**SOMEONE TO LOVE**—Bullseye Blues 9514: *SOMEONE TO LOVE; I WONDER HOW SHE KNOWS; DON'T DRIVE ME AWAY; NOT SO FAR; TELL ME YOU'LL WAIT FOR ME; BE SHARP YOU'LL SEE; EVERY LITTLE BIT HURTS; I WANT TO GO HOME; I DON'T WANT TO GET ADJUSTED.* (46:23)

**Personnel:** Brown, vocal, piano, organ; Danny Caron, guitar; Clifford Solomon, Bobby Forte, tenor saxes; Tommie McKenzie, acoustic bass; Gaylord Birch, drums; Bonnie Raitt, vocal (1), slide guitar (7).

★★★★★

**BLUES AND OTHER LOVE SONGS**—Muse 5466: *DO YOU WANT ME? FOOL THAT I AM; WHOSE BEATING MY TIME; I PUT MYSELF TOGETHER; WHAT A LIFE; MINT JULEP; YOU ARE MY FIRST LOVE; 'ROUND MIDNIGHT; BEFORE THE EVENING SUN SETS; I'VE GOT A RIGHT TO CRY.* (51:41)

**Personnel:** Brown, vocal, piano; Houston Person, tenor sax (1,2,4-6); Ruth Davies, bass; Danny Caron, guitar; Gaylord Birch, drums.

★★★★★

No use separating the legendary Charles Brown's multiple talents, these two albums both revel in the ache of his slumbering hound voice and nimbleness of his creative fingers. *Someone To Love*, Bullseye Blues' follow-up to Brown's '91 Grammy-nominated *All My Life*, is gilded with Bonnie Raitt's contributions, Elvis Costello's "I Wonder How She Knows," a crystalline but seemingly natural mix, utterly relaxed yet focused group and solo play. It has the advantages of an uptempo number, a sublime organ track—more, Charles, please!—and better cover photos.

Muse's January '92 sessions weren't quite so well budgeted or artfully recorded, but sound comfy anyway. Producer/saxist Person is completely credible blowing over Brown's shoulder. *Blues And Other Love Songs* has fewer Brown-penned tunes but great covers, an equally

generous helping of his seductive crooning, magnificent slow swinging tempi, and a slightly jazzier feel.

The pianist's alter egos—drummer Birch and guitarist Caron—are superb on both albums. If you dig Professor Longhair, Ray Charles, Betty Carter, and/or Tony Bennett, your collection wants at least two Charles Brown albums. —Howard Mandel



## Johnny Hodges

**EVERYBODY KNOWS JOHNNY HODGES**—GRP/Impulse! 116: *EVERYBODY KNOWS; A FLOWER IS A LOVESOME THING; PAPA KNOWS; 310 BLUES; THE JEEP IS JUMPIN'; MAIN STEM; MEDLEY: I LET A SONG GO OUT OF MY HEART/DON'T GET AROUND MUCH ANYMORE; OPEN MIKE; STOMPY JONES; MOOD INDIGO; GOOD QUEEN BESS; LITTLE BROTHER; JEEP'S BLUES; DO NOTHIN' TILL YOU HEAR FROM ME; RUIN; SASSY CUE.* (68:56)

**Personnel:** Hodges, alto sax, leader (1-8); Lawrence Brown, trombone, leader (9-16); Paul Gonzalves, tenor sax; Cat Anderson, Ray Nance, trumpet; Jimmy Jones, piano;—(1-8) Ernie Shepard, bass; Grady Tate, drums;—(5-8) Russell Procope, alto sax; Jimmy Hamilton, tenor sax; Harry Carney, baritone sax; Rolf Ericson, Herb Jones, trumpet; Buster Cooper, Britt Woodman, trombone;—(9-16) Procope, alto saxophone, clarinet; Harold Ashby, tenor sax; Cooper, trombone; Richard Davis, bass; Gus Johnson (except 10,12), Johnny Hodges, Jr. (10,12), drums.

★★★★★

Everything about this double-reissue makes sense except the dumb packaging. Quiet as it's kept, there are two complete LPs here, the 1964 Hodges date advertised, and trombonist Lawrence Brown's 1965 *Inspired Abandon*, with many of the same players, like the leaders, drawn from Ellington's band. These sessions fit together like cognac and candlelight; combining them was a good idea. Yet only on page 14 of the booklet are you told half the pieces were recorded under Brown's leadership, and what album they're from.

Both albums were made without Ellington's direct involvement, but easily attain a Ducal feel, less by way of intricate arrangements than by employing a roster of his prime soloists, Duke's and Strayhorn's glorious melodies, and supple or houserocking swing. (The drummers forge Sam Woodyard's signature rimshots.) Even on the octet tracks, these vets ably evoke the Ellington effect, the master's voice.

Every smart jazz fan knows Hodges' slithery majestic sound, a sound (as Wes Anderson and Michael Hashim obligingly demonstrate) which largely resists successful imitation. Brown, like Hodges, a distinguished soloist

even by Ellington standards, isn't as celebrated these days; perhaps his tight vibrato makes him sound old-fashioned to some. But as "Do Nothin'" confirms, his dark, burnished tone was as romantic as Hodges' bright one. They're a perfect pair. —Kevin Whitehead



## Robben Ford

**ROBBEN FORD & THE BLUE LINE**—Stretch STD-1002: *THE BROTHER (FOR JIMMY & STEVIE); YOU CUT ME TO THE BONE; REAL MAN; MY LOVE WILL NEVER DIE; STEP ON IT; PRISON OF LOVE; TELL ME I'M YOUR MAN; START IT UP; LIFE SONG (ONE FOR ANNIE).* (48:27)

**Personnel:** Ford, guitar, vocals; Roscoe Beck, bass; Tom Brechtlein, drums; Bill Boublit, keyboards (4,5,8); Russell Ferrante, keyboards (1,7,9); William "Smitty" Smith, keyboards (6); Mark Ford, harmonica (6); Bob Malach, tenor sax (4); Dan Fornero, trumpet (4).

★★★★★

Robben Ford's follow-up to 1988's Grammy-nominated *Talk To Your Daughter* (Warner Bros.) falls somewhere between Stevie Ray Vaughan and Gary Moore on the contemporary blues grit scale. Slicker than SRV but far earthier than Moore, the Brit heavy-metal guitarist turned born-again bluesman, *Robben Ford & The Blue Line* is more authentic than affectation. And that should be no surprise, considering Ford began his career 20 years ago playing the real deal with bluesharp ace Charlie Musselwhite.

While Moore regurgitates well-rehearsed blues clichés on command, Ford assimilated that vocabulary into his own voice years ago so that his playing is more organic, coming from a purer place. Plus, he has a much larger harmonic reservoir to draw from than Moore. And his band shuffles better and swings harder. Ford pays tribute to Jimmie and Stevie Ray Vaughan on the aggressive string-bending instrumental, "The Brother," and gives a nod to Eric Johnson on the other rockin' instrumental, "Step On It." And besides being a killer soloist, he's a sly, seductive blues crooner as well, sounding a touch like Mose Allison on John Hiatt's tongue-in-cheek "Real Man" and howling with conviction on the Otis Rush lament, "My Love Will Never Die."

The raunchy Chicago-styled harmonica shuffle "Prison Of Love" is a reunion with brother Mark (they played together 20 years ago in the Charles Ford Band). And the use of brushes, walking bass, and subdued wah-wah statements on the swinging "You Cut Me To The Bone" recalls one of Jimi Hendrix's jazziest pieces, "Up From The Skies." —Bill Milkowski

MICHEL PETRUCCIANI



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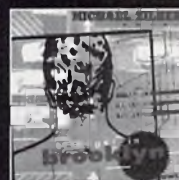
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CD REVIEWS



**John Hicks**

**FRIENDS OLD AND NEW**—Novus 63141-2: *HICK'S TONE; I WANT TO TALK ABOUT YOU; BOP SCOTCH; TRUE BLUE; IT'S DON'T MEAN A THING; NUTTY; MAKIN' WHOOPEE; ROSETTA.* (51:13)  
**Personnel:** Hicks, piano; Clark Terry, Greg Gisbert, trumpet; Al Grey, trombone; Joshua Redman, tenor saxophone; Ron Carter, bass; Grady Tate, drums.

★ ★ ★

**CRAZY FOR YOU**—Red Baron AK 52761: *K-RA-ZY FOR YOU, PARTS 1 & 2; EMBRACEABLE YOU; I GOT RHYTHM; THEY CAN'T TAKE THAT AWAY FROM ME; BIDIN' MY TIME; SOMEONE TO WATCH OVER ME; NICE WORK IF YOU CAN GET IT; BUT NOT FOR ME; I GOT RHYTHM—REPRISE.* (57:40)  
**Personnel:** Hicks, piano; Wilbur Bascomb, Jr., bass; Kenny Washington, drums.

★ ★ ★

**John Hicks & Elise Wood**

**LUMINOUS**—Evidence ECD 22033: *LUMINOUS; YEMENJA; OJOS DE ROJO; BLUE IN GREEN; MOTIVATIONS; EXPECTATIONS; CHELSEA BRIDGE; OSAKA; ONCE IN A WHILE; I'M GETTING SENTIMENTAL OVER YOU; UPPER MANHATTAN MEDICAL GROUP.* (63:37)  
**Personnel:** Hicks, piano; Wood, flute, alto flute (cuts 4,8); Clifford Jordan, tenor saxophone (1,2,8); Walter Booker, bass; Jimmy Cobb, Alvin Queen (5,6), drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

John Hicks is a complete jazz pianist, a powerful soloist, a sensitive accompanist, and a dynamo driving a band. But, his transition to a marquee player for the major labels is a bit over-handled, as suggested by *Friends Old And New* and *Crazy For You*. Both the summit-

meeting-of-the-generations slant of *Friends* and the riding-on-the-coattails-of-a-Broadway-hit hook of *Crazy* have the imprimatur of the eminent Bob Thiele, who produced both dates. Yet, *Luminous*, co-produced by Hicks and flutist Elise Wood, is the more compelling statement of Hicks' artistry, as it documents a decade-long musical partnership without trendy formatting.

The problem with *Crazy* is encapsulated in the inclusion of two very similar takes of both "K-ra-zy" and "I Got Rhythm"—this is a thin, pat premise for an album. These two chestnuts do allow Hicks to stretch out over a propulsive, pared-down set of changes. But, since most of the fireworks are front-loaded into the program, the sequence of ballads and mid-tempo vehicles that make up the bulk of the remaining material dissipates the album's initial burst of energy. Still, the fluid interaction of Hicks, Wilbur Bascomb, and Kenny Washington carries the date to the finish line.

*Friends* has the added asset of Hicks coaxing several distinctive soloists, in addition to handing in his own impressive statements. It's not surprising that Monk Competition winner Joshua Redman brings a Rouse-derived brawn to "Nuttty," but he also proves to be equally adroit on his prebop features. Not pairing him with a feisty Al Grey on "Whoopie," or letting him vent his Dexter Gordanesque savoir faire on "I Want," were missed opportunities. However, the groupings produced some engaging results, particularly the crisp sparring of teacher/student trumpeters Clark Terry and Greg Gisbert on "Bop Scotch."

*Luminous* is an especially well-crafted set. The close rapport between Hicks and Wood—a flutist with impeccable tone, a knowing touch with ballads, and an ample ability to swing, demanding material with conviction—is detailed in a variety of settings, including gorgeous duo takes of "Blue In Green," "Chelsea Bridge," and "Upper Manhattan." The other highlights of the album are the three rousing quintet cuts featuring the glowing-coal heat of Clifford Jordan's tenor. The fine trio and quartet features are the program's glue, providing variety and continuity, simultaneously. *Luminous* is a shining example of jazz album-making.  
—Bill Shoemaker

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## Julius Hemphill

**FAT MAN AND THE HARD BLUES**—Black Saint 120 115: *OTIS' GROOVE; LENNY; FLOPPY; OPENING; HEADLINES; FOUR SAINTS; FAT MAN; GLIDE; TENDRILLS; ANCHORMAN; UNTITLED; THREE-STEP; THE ANSWER; THE HARD BLUES.* (55:17)

**Personnel:** Hemphill, alto sax; Mary Ehrlich, soprano sax, alto sax, flute; Carl Grubbs, soprano sax, alto sax; James Carter, Andrew White, tenor sax; Sam Furnace, baritone sax, flute.

★★★★★

**LIVE FROM THE NEW MUSIC CAFE**—Music & Arts CD-731: *SIXTEEN; TESTAMENT No. 5; FIFTEEN; DOGON AD; GEORGIA BLUE; BORDERTOWN; FLOPPY.* (69:58)

**Personnel:** Hemphill, alto, soprano sax; Abdul Wadud, cello; Joe Bonadio, drums, percussion.

★★★★★

All the reed you need, right here. Hemphill's been writing a lot of saxophone music since parting ways with the World Saxophone Quartet three years ago. *The Fat Man And The Hard Blues* is a selection of sax-sextet shorties that includes one piece from *Long Tongues* (his saxophone-opera), several from a collaboration with choreographer Bill T. Jones, the classic Hemphill gemstone "The Hard Blues," and plenty more.

Though their profiles are relatively low, the altoist's five accomplices are outstanding. "Lenny" and "Anchorman" are backdrops for super tenor solos by D.C.-based Coltrane-scribe Andrew White; young James Carter blows a tongue-chopped tenor solo through the silky "Four Saints"; the chord progression of "Headlines" gets caught in a revolving door while Hemphill matches alto to Ehrlich's independent but complementary soprano. There's

r&b bite on "Otis' Groove," root-tooting big-band abandon on "Floppy," and gentle force on the fully-notated "Three-Step." "Opening" basks in the six-sax sonority with placid, organ-ish long-tones and clots of dissonance. The group plays the tar out of Hemphill's thick compositions, uniquely arranged with middle-rich (but never muddy) voicings.

Like his fantastic 1977 trio date for Black Saint, *Raw Materials And Residuals*, the live trio disc cuts Hemphill room to blow. Bonadio is forceful, with just the right jagged funkiness, and Wadud doubles down low and upfront with

his usual excellence. On "Testament No. 5," for instance, they set an elegant stage for Hemphill's darting, arching lines with a cello glissando and malleted toms. Here again, there are some familiar Hemphill tunes, like the 20-year-old "Dogon AD," but they're treated to brilliant new readings.

The blues are Hemphill's lone-star lucky charm. Both as a composer and as a soloist, he's got a remarkable way of taking a seemingly innocent blues line and extracting its raw out-ness with the mere twist of a note or two.

—John Corbett

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## Benny Carter

**HARLEM RENAISSANCE**—MusicMasters 65080-2: *VINE STREET RUMBLE*; *SÃO PAULO*; *I CAN'T GET STARTED*; *STOCKHOLM SWEETNIN*; *EVENING STAR*; *HOW HIGH THE MOON*; *TALES OF THE RISING SUN SUITE*; *AUGUST MOON/TEATIME/SONG OF LONG AGO/SAMURAI SONG/CHOW CHOW*; *HARLEM RENAISSANCE SUITE*: *LAMENT FOR LANGSTON/SUGAR HILL SLOW DRAG/HAPPY FEET/SUNDAY MORNING/HAPPY FEET*. (47:24/52:58)

**Personnel:** John Eckert, Richard Grant, Virgil Jones, Michael Mossman, trumpets; Eddie Bert, Curtis Hasselbring, Benny Powell, Dennis Wilson, trombones; Carter, Frank Wess, Ralph Bowen, Loren Schoenberg, Jeff Rupert, Danny Bank, saxophones; Chris Neville, piano; Remo Palmier, guitar; Lisle Atkinson, bass; Kenny Washington, drums; the Rutgers University Orchestra (second CD only).

★ ★ ★ 1/2

Among Benny Carter's more unsung gifts is his ability to turn a nice tune, to make a melody that

is simple, direct, and easy on the memory. This is apparent on much of this double-CD set of mostly Carter compositions recorded last February. The first disc is a fairly standard ork set, although smoothly done. The arrangements by Carter are unambitious and self-effacing. "How High The Moon," 17 solo choruses before the first ensemble note is struck, is hardly an arrangement at all. Then it takes us from swing to bop to free jazz in three final tongue-in-cheek choruses. The music is leavened principally by Carter's own playing, especially on "Evening Star."

On the second disc we have a Carter to whom the jazz world hasn't paid a lot of attention over the years. The one who's labored (and prospered) on the sidelines of his stardom scoring movies and television work. Although the strings sound a bit thin here and there on the *Rising Sun Suite*, the tunes and tempos have such a lovely, light, and airy texture, images of Fred Astaire and Cyd Charisse seem to flit everywhere. And "Chow Chow" (aka "Chopsticks," that most egregiously childish melody) blooms in elegant ways unimagined, including one of Carter's signature reed soli, which is pure fire under grace.

On the *Harlem Renaissance Suite*, Carter's use of strings brings an epic quality to the blues on "Sugar Hill Slow Drag." And "Happy Feet," with its familiar riffs and changes, has a pair of vintage choruses by Schoenberg that swing harder than anything else in sight.

—John McDonough

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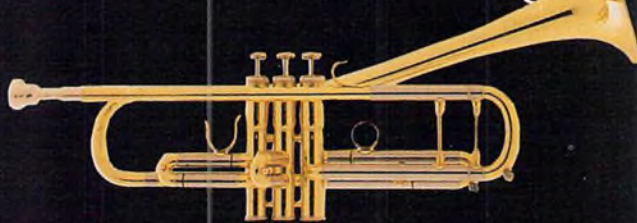
by John Litweiler

The sound of Art Blakey's drums and the discipline of his leadership gave every band he led an instant identity. How did he do it? In Doug Ramsey's liner notes to Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers *Paris 1958* (Bluebird 61097; 64:34 ★★★★★<sup>1/2</sup>), Benny Golson reveals just how the master would take a young player and, through fine instincts for structure, sound, and dynamics, guide him to make authoritative statements. It was not only Golson (still torn between the post-Webster tenor tradition and Coltrane's sheets of sound) whom Blakey inspired to personal revelations in this quintet—he transformed Bobby Timmons from an eclectic into an ingenious late-blooming bop pianist.

Trumpeter Lee Morgan, 20 years old, had already advanced from his early Clifford Brown-like style into subtler, darker, at times obsessive ideas, while Jymie Merritt was a blues-rooted heir to the post-Milt Hinton tradition of sensitive ensemble bass playing. Here they stretch out in live performances of favorites like Timmons' "Moanin'" and Golson's "Blues March" and "Whisper Not," Morgan characteristically sly, the foot-stomping Golson rather diffuse; on "Now's The Time," both sound almost giddy. It's soul-warming music; the CD includes half the material originally released on three French RCA LPs.

It's true that Blakey had led recordings with

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TED WILLIAMS

Art Blakey: composing from the drumstool

the likes of Clifford Brown and John Coltrane, but the quintet of *The Complete Blue Note Recordings Of Art Blakey's 1960 Jazz Messengers* (Mosaic MD6-141; 73:12/65:29/70:33/56:07/63:16/62:22: ★★★★★), with tenorman Wayne Shorter replacing Golson, was his finest ensemble of all. The high quality of the music on these six CDs is almost unparalleled for consistency. In the course of a long, distinguished career, Shorter has never played better than on these sessions, and he was the most prolific composer Blakey ever hired, too—40 percent of these themes are his work. Like his songs, his tenor solos are indestructible; oriented to thematic improvisation at least as much as Rollins, Shorter liked to mount his structures in four- and eight-bar pyramid blocks, each strain perfectly shaped and finished.

Such a variety of Shorter solos, too, from austere sweetness on the melancholy waltz, "Pisces," to fine melodies on "So T red" to great storms on "Tell It Like It Is" to the barely disguised r&b of "High Modes"; a beauty such as his "Giantis" solo is not so much played as it blossoms forth from a motivic sprcut. Whatever his links—in terms of strong, even tone, or quartal harmonies, or downbeat accenting—to Coltrane, his solos are unmistakably personal.

Merritt takes only one solo on these 54 selections, yet his importance is not to be missed. Hear his perfect choice of notes on "Round About Midnight" to learn how to provide exactly the right setting for soloists. After the complexities of the two horns, Timmons provides recurring emotional relief, in rolling, usually funky solos—Powell, Silver, and Garland provide most of his phrasing—often with his own kind of mounting intensity (hear his melodies on "Blue Ching" and his theme-derived "The Summit" solo, for instance).

As composer, Morgan (like Shorter) was fond of flatted-fifth voicings, half-modal and half-chordal structures, minor keys, and exotic rhythms, even if he was the funkier one of the pair. As soloist, his famed intro and coda to "Paper Moon" are perfect examples of his ironic humor, *joie de vivre*, and instinctive shapeliness. Often he begins solos simply with long tones or stuttered notes ("Witch Doctor"), but he typically moves into nervous complexities with harmonically strained riffs or phrases that virtually feud with each other ("Ping-Pong") before achieving a bravura climax and ending in intimate lines. In the years between swingmaster Rex Stewart and free jazz's Lester



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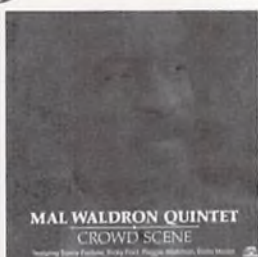
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Bowie, no other trumpeter discovered such a variety of expressive sounds; moreover, Morgan's half-valve interpolations and stuttered notes are an expression of elegance—that cornbread-and-champagne elegance unique to jazz—as much as of cruel humor.

It is Blakey, "composing from the drumstool" (critic Jack Cooke's words), who makes it all work. Note how his accompaniment changes from track to track—he gives each song its distinctive character. It's his fiery accompaniments and solo that shape "Night In Tunisia," a performance that virtually defines how hard-bop differs from bebop. The close structures of the long "Night Watch" and "The Summit" would be impossible without his direction. He solos only occasionally, selectively: "The Freedom Rider," though, is Blakey all alone, in a tense, exhaustive, even epic drama.

The recording dates in this box run from March 1960 to May 1961. These Messengers debuted as a fully mature unit; to the extent they evolved, it was in the steadily increasing similarity of Morgan's and Shorter's senses of humor and phrasing (long passages of either's solos sound, by 1961, as if the other conceived them). It's hard to pick favorites from such a treasure chest, but the live Birdland date (including three new Hank Mobley songs) and the "Witch Doctor" date are high points of single-minded group spirit. Bob Blumenthal wrote the highly informative accompanying booklet, with lovely Frank Wolff photos. The box is sold by mail order only: Mosaic Records, 35 Melrose Place, Stamford, CT 06902.

By late 1961, when *Buhaina's Delight* (Blue Note 84104 2; 62:54; ★★★★★) was recorded, the Messengers were a sextet with three important personnel changes. Lyric bop trombonist Curtis Fuller had been added, and the quite able Cedar Walton had replaced Timmons. Freddie Hubbard was now the trumpeter; his brilliance sounds curiously detached—he has the disconcerting tendency to suddenly abandon promising developments for long, glistening tones or flowery passages. Shorter by now has begun to gravitate toward his later, largely Coltrane-dominated approach, and the several styles he presents on his charming ballad, "Contemplation"—extroverted and introverted, full of notes, and including some specifically Trane phrases—display the crisis in his music. There are more fine themes, including Shorter's "Backstage Sally," and a terrific Blakey solo-display piece, "Bu's Delight."

For the rest of Blakey's life he continued to bring out the best in disparate young players, turning them into bands with a constantly changing repertoire. Three new CDs present mid-'80s Messengers. One brief track on *Hard Champion* (Evidence 22025; 41:04; ★★★) is by the Philip Harper/Kenny Garrett/Javon Jackson edition, the rest from the 1985 sextet with Terence Blanchard live at New York's Sweet Basil. The drifting modal changes of Shorter's post-Messengers song "Witch Hunt" defy this band, but trumpeter Blanchard pursues interesting ideas in "Scenic Route," wherein altoist Donald Harrison's volleys of notes sound simply eccentric.

The other two Evidence CDs are by the 1985 septet, which includes, among its virtues, the rough-edged bop trombone of Tim Williams. A

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flaw of *Dr. Jeckyle* (Evidence 22001; 44:07. ★★★½) is the recurring cymbal shimmer that obscures Blakey's own playing on the recording. "Fuller Love" presents solid evidence of Blanchard's multi-faceted mastery, while the drive of his opening solo is almost the only virtue of the title track, taken at much too fast a tempo. On Ron Carter's moody blues, "81," Harrison attempts to construct a long solo using small, broken phrases, and, in fact, almost succeeds. As on the other Evidence CDs, Mulgrew Miller is an effective pianist, though Lonnie Plaxico's amplified bass comes across as an ongoing rumble.

On *New Year's Eve At Sweet Basil* (Evidence 22029; 47:56. ★★★½), Blakey's interplay, with building punctuation, drives Blanchard to a fine "Hide And Seek" solo; even at this fiery tempo, the trumpeter's relaxation is a wonder, and he offers a carefully constructed solo on "New York" as well. There is, however, no real unity of vision among this group. For all the inherent drama of Jean Toussaint's tenor sax ideas, he doesn't conceive beyond four-bar units, and his solos tend to break down. In those days, Harrison had a recurring perverse streak that manifested itself in the strange barking phrases that open his "New York" solo. Even more strangely, they return on his ballad feature, "I Want To Talk About You," which ends with—strangest of all—his peeping on one note.

DB

## Milkin' Sonny

by Kevin Whitehead

Listening to **Sonny Rollins** on *The Complete Prestige Recordings* (Prestige 7PCD-4407-2; 7 CDs; 70:42/72:08/75:44/73:46/67:48/65:47/70:10. ★★★★★) is like looking at a sequence of photographs of some famous personage as a youth. With each successive snapshot, the subject, at first unrecognizable, resembles the familiar icon more and more. On the Prestige sides—90 tunes, including the few extant alternates, spanning 1949 to '56—Sonny enters at 18 bopping Bird-like, his tenor tone callow behind J.J. Johnson, and exits in a blaze of glory, blowing strong at insane speed on "B. Quick." In between, you hear the elements of his (first) classic style fall into place, session by session. By July 1951 and "I Know"—released under Sonny's name, but recorded at a Miles date (he led five of 19 sessions here) with Davis on piano—he was already starting to sound like *Sonny Rollins*, the master of rhythmic assurance, boisterous energy, tension-building rests, and harshly beautiful tone.

By December of '51 and his first full date as leader, Sonny's tone was becoming deeper, like an adolescent approaching manhood. "With A Song In My Heart" displays his trademark breezy, blowzy insouciance. By '56's



Sonny Rollins: harshly beautiful

*Tenor Madness* session—on "You Don't Know What Love Is" especially—his sound had become downright voluptuous.

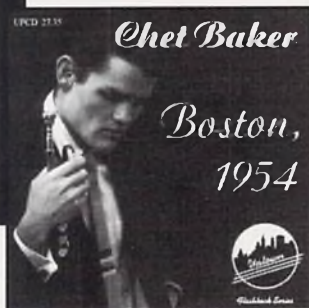
No endless apprenticeship humbly paying tribute to the masters for Rollins; he knew the idea is to get your own sound. Not that he was impervious to influence. Miles' habit of dryly

# 3 NEW RELEASES FROM UPTOWN



## Chet Baker, Boston, 1954

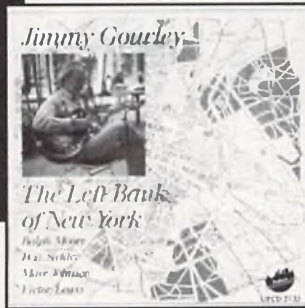
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inserting oblique quotes into solos likely influenced Sonny's doing same, and helped fuel Rollins' more flamboyant humor and, perhaps, his celebrated preoccupation with thematic unity. (A phrase early in Miles' "Bluing" solo foreshadows the quote from "It's A Pity To Say Goodnight" that concludes it.) On "Think Of One," as Monk's sideman in '53, Rollins meets the composer on his own terms, via generous use of space and parsimony with notes. His lasting admiration for Parker comes across in a 1956 Bird medley; his recording of "Slow Boat To China" likely stems from Parker's love of the tune, rather than Sonny's own endearing penchant for improbable material.

Rollins insists he plays kitschy tunes like "There's No Business Like Show Business" (12/55) 'cause he honestly likes them; their broad melodic gestures lend themselves to his outsize sensibility. The cornier the line, the more spirited the treatment.

Unlike Coltrane, Rollins didn't make upteen jam-session dates for Prestige; he recorded as sideman only with Miles, Monk, and Art Farmer —with the last on just three tunes—though for one of his own dates he hired his bandmates from the Clifford Brown/Max Roach quintet. There's no fat here. Sound's generally good, and notes by Sonny scholars Bob Blumenthal and Charles Blancq steer you right. One quibble: since the Fantasy Records group includes Riverside and Contemporary as well as Prestige, producer Orrin Keepnews might've included Rollins' several '57-'58 dates for those labels, too.

Six years ago, RCA decided not to issue its Rollins titles as they originally appeared on LP, ensuring we'd eventually get a confusing grab-bag like *Alternatives* (Bluebird 61124-2; 63:43; ★★★½). The music's good—sidfolk, in various combinations, are Herbie Hancock, cornetist Thad Jones, bassists Bob Cranshaw and Ron Carter, drummer Roy McCurdy, and *conguero* Candido—but the package is a hodge-podge. There are two tracks from the old *What's New* LP and four from *Now's The Time*, all new to CD, plus previously unissued-in-the-States versions of "I Remember Clifford," "Four," "St. Thomas," and "52nd Street Theme," alternates of those included *Now's The Time* takes. This means most of Sonny's RCA recordings are now out, but not all: three titles found on the defunct LP twofers *The Quartets Featuring Jim Hall*—but not the single-CD version—are missing, as are some other unreleased-in-the-U.S. alternate takes. Confused? No wonder.

RCA's previous *On The Outside* (Bluebird 2496-2; 61:51; ★★★½) collects Sonny's complete '62-'63 sessions with trumpeter Don Cherry, drummer Billy Higgins, and Cranshaw or Henry Grimes on bass. Obviously, given the lineup, Sonny had Ornette's freebop in mind. Like Coleman, he'll imply a chord sequence with an improvised line, but may throw it out of whack by abbreviating or elongating a phrase. Higgins, like any good Ornette drummer, punctuates the saxophonist's sentences to lend coherence, to let Rollins know he's listening, and to help us follow. Sonny doesn't cop Ornette's style to make the case he understands his method. The way to greatness is to be yourself.

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## Chico Freeman & Mal Waldron

**UP AND DOWN**—Black Saint 120 136-2:  
*BATTLEGROUND; HIROMI, TYROLEAN WALTZ; AFTER-  
MATH; MY ONE AND ONLY LOVE; UP AND DOWN.*  
(56:07)

**Personnel:** Freeman, tenor, soprano saxes; Wal-  
dron, piano; Tiziana Ghigioni, vocal (2.5); Ricky  
Knauer, bass.

★ ★ ★

## Mal Waldron & Jackie McLean

**LEFT ALONE**—Evidence ECD 22006-2: *LEFT  
ALONE; GOD BLESS THE CHILD; ALL OF ME; CAT  
WALK; LOVER MAN; MINOR PULSATION; GOOD  
MORNING HEARTACHE; ALL ALONE; SUPER OKRA  
BLUES; LEFT ALONE.* (62:27)

**Personnel:** Waldron, piano; McLean, alto sax;  
Herbie Lewis, bass; Eddie Moore, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

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Pianist Waldron is an odd modernist. Essen-  
tially reactive, seldom effusive—in fact, unusu-  
ally spare and repetitive—he determines di-  
verse colors and shapes for the sessions he  
participates in like a quiet polymorph and/or  
chameleon whose apparent limits are decep-  
tive. On the 15½-minute freely improvised duo  
with gracefully macho tenorist Freeman on  
"Battleground," Waldron controls pace and  
phrase through placement and volume of dis-  
sonant chords and contrary motion.

Especially skilled as an accompanist, the  
pianist gently supports Ghigioni's whispery  
scat effort and ballad reading, and applies a  
heavy-rocking waltz to Freeman's soprano,  
which however it wends cannot break free,  
much less wrest control. Perhaps Waldron  
simply means to provide a backdrop against  
which the others act. But his backdrop con-  
tains their every move. Bassist Knauer is equal  
to his tasks here, laying a strong ostinato and  
surprise modulation under Freeman's modal  
title track.

Waldron and McLean go way back—to the  
altoist's first records of '55 to '57, Mingus' Jazz  
Workshop, and the pianist's '59 Bethlehem *Left  
Alone*. They revisit that tune in two takes on the  
Evidence release of a Japanese King album  
from '86, an album that's straightforward me-  
lodically and rhythmically throughout. Bassist  
Lewis and underacclaimed great Eddie Moore  
never flag, and a 12-plus-minute "Minor Pulsation"  
is worth the admission, since Waldron  
plays an extended solo. He's not trying to  
impress with technique, but like McLean—  
whose sour bite, thick mid-range, and low gruff  
is oh-so purposeful—Waldron really has  
something to say.

—Howard Mandel

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## Mike Stern

**STANDARDS (AND OTHER SONGS)**—Atlantic Jazz 82419-2: *Like Someone In Love*; *Source*; *There Is No Greater Love*; *L Bird*; *Moment's Notice*; *Lost Time*; *Windows*; *Straight No Chaser*; *Peace*; *Jean Pierre*; *Nardis*.

**Personnel:** Stern, guitar; Al Foster, drums; Ben Perowsky, drums (cuts 6,11); Jay Anderson, bass; Larry Grenadier, bass (6,11); Gil Goldstein, keyboards (6,11); Randy Brecker, trumpet (4); Bob Berg, tenor sax (6). Produced by Gil Goldstein.

★ ★ ★ ★ 1/2

## Toninho Horta

**ONCE I LOVED**—Verve 314 513 561: *Pica Pau*; *Lullaby Of Birdland*; *Stella By Starlight*; *Waltz For Mariana*; *My Funny Valentine*; *Isn't It Romantic*; *O Amor Em Paz* (*Once I Loved*); *Footprints*; *Tarde*; *Minas Train*.

**Personnel:** Horta, guitar; Billy Higgins, drums; Gary Peacock, bass. Produced by Eliane Elias.

★ ★ ★ ★ 1/2

Two guitarists from disparate backgrounds tackle jazz standards in the stripped-down setting of trio. From Mike Stern, it's home base. For Brazilian Toninho Horta, it's something new and completely different. I've been waiting 10 years for Stern to make this album. New Yorkers who have caught him at the intimate 55 Bar over the past several years know how tender and lyrical his playing can be in this context. It's the kinder, gentler Stern as opposed to the ferocious heavy-metal bebopper he became with Miles Davis (who told him to "turn it up or turn it off"). More Jim Hall than Jimi Hendrix, this Mike Stern is about swing, elegance, and interplay. He's still burning but on a much lower flame.

It's especially satisfying to hear this side of Stern in the company of the great Al Foster. His brisk brushwork on "Like Someone In Love" and "There Is No Greater Love" is the catalyst behind Stern's quicksilver phrasing. His relentless ride-cymbal pulse and surprising snare accents on John Coltrane's "Moment's Notice" and Thelonious Monk's "Straight No Chaser" goose Stern to the stratosphere. Randy Brecker turns in some beautiful muted trumpet work on Stern's ballad, "L Bird," and Mike teams up with his sax-playing partner Bob Berg on the lone quintet cut, "Lost Time." Stern pays tribute to Miles on "Nardis" and a brief, subdued reading of "Jean Pierre" (a signature from his days with Davis). His "Source" is a gentle acoustic interlude, while Chick Corea's "Windows" gives him a chance to explore rich chordal voicings, which is actually Toninho Horta's strong suit.

On *Once I Loved*, the bossa nova guitarist

sounds most comfortable when he's interpreting the standards from his own unique Brazilian point of view. Since he doesn't possess Stern's "chops of doom," blowing over changes in a linear fashion is not his forte, which is why he remains pretty faithful to the melody on "Lullaby Of Birdland" and "Isn't It Romantic" and seems somewhat tentative on Wayne Shorter's "Footprints." The magic happens when Horta digs for his roots and sticks to his pianistic approach to the guitar. He turns "Stella By Starlight" into an alluring bossa and fully ex-

plores the rich chordal voicings of "My Funny Valentine." His velvety comping touch underscores Jobim's "O Amore En Paz" and Milton Nascimento's "Tarde." And his octave playing on "Pica Pau" is an obvious nod to one of his guitar heroes, Wes Montgomery.

Half the appeal of this album is hearing Billy Higgins doing his thing. He's got that irrepressible bounce happening on his snare and his brush work is a real treat. Gary Peacock also turns in several first-rate solos, particularly on "Waltz For Mariana." —Bill Milkowski

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## Roots Redux

by Larry Birnbaum

The outstanding exception to the major labels' stingy policy toward CD reissues of blues, boogie, gospel, jug-band, Cajun, and old-time country music has been Sony's Roots N' Blues series, whose latest four-disc installment, *The Retrospective (1925-1950)* (Columbia Legacy C4K 47911; 76:10/77:53/77:53/77:08: ★★★★★) shows there's plenty of gold left to be mined. Of the more than 100 tracks by as many artists, nearly half are previously unissued, with unknown performers often casting more light than the stars. The jumble of genres, in roughly chronological order, creates a musical cross section, reflecting the evolution of an era.

*Disc One* captures the raw energy of first-wave rural recordings, shaped by oral tradition rather than radio. Banjo legend Charlie Poole anticipates Woody Guthrie on "Whitehouse Blues," but an obscure track by slide guitarist Sherman Tedder is just as impressive. The country selections generally outshine the blues, though Mississippi John Hurt's gently mordant "Big Leg Blues" cuts to the bone. Reverend Johnny Blakey's earthy sermonizing and the Daniels-Deason Sacred Harp Singers' heavenly harmonies provide spiritual uplift.

*Disc Two* runs from 1929 to 1934, when record sales peaked and suddenly collapsed.

The focus on lesser-knowns accentuates the mediocre, but there's still a wealth of winners, from fiddle breakdowns by W.T. Narmour and S.W. Smith, Gid Tanner, and the Pelican Wildcats to blues by Roosevelt Sykes, Lonnie Johnson, and Peetie Wheatstraw. Other highlights include the Cajun accordions of Slim Doucet and Joe Falcon, and the high-wire harmonica of Blues Birdhead.

The '30s brought commercial formulization to folk music, along with a jazzy feel that crossed all stylistic lines. The prevailing mood on *Disc Three* matches the depressed economy, with occasional cheer from Western swingers like the Night Owls and Blue Ridge Ramblers. Less-than-best takes by blues masters Blind Willie McTell, Charlie Patton, Leroy Carr, Big Bill Broonzy, and Albert Ammons allow Little Buddy Doyle and Jazz Gillum to steal the show; but the Anglin Twins' angelic gospel duet is the real revelation.

From the first track of *Disc Four*, bluesman Frank Edwards' 1941 "We Got To Get Together," the scent of rock & roll is in the air. The lyrics to Tony Hollins' "Cross Cut Saw Blues" sound perfectly natural, while Little Son Joe's "Black Rat Swing" rocks with a literal vengeance. Muddy Waters' blues and Bill Monroe's bluegrass stand out, but no more affectingly than Adolf Hofner's Western swing or the Landfordaires' four-part gospel harmonies. Overall, *The Retrospective* is more education than inspiration, but it sure makes learning fun. DB



## Paul Bley

**BLUES FOR RED**—Red 123238: *BLUES FOR RED; REAR PROJECTION; INTO THE NIGHT; ABOVE BOARD; DELIRIOUS BOOGIE; UNDERGROUND; UP HILL; LATIN THING; DOWNTOWN; LATE NIGHT BLUES; BABY NARROWS; CAPRICIOUS; SOLO MIO; EXIT.* (70:24)

Personnel: Bley, piano.

★★★★½

## Bley, Haden, Motian

**MEMOIRS**—Soul Note 121240: *MEMOIRS; MONK'S DREAM; DARK VICTORY; LATIN GENETICS; THIS IS YOUR HOUR; INSANITY; NEW FLAME; STING A RING; BLUES FOR JOSH; ENOUGH IS ENOUGH.* (70:54)

Personnel: Bley, piano; Charlie Haden, bass; Paul Motian, drums.

★★★★½

## Bley, Peacock, Altschul

**JAPAN SUITE**—IAI 123849: *JAPAN SUITE, PARTS I AND II.* (31:52)

Personnel: Bley, acoustic, electric piano; Gary Peacock, bass; Barry Altschul, drums.

★★★★

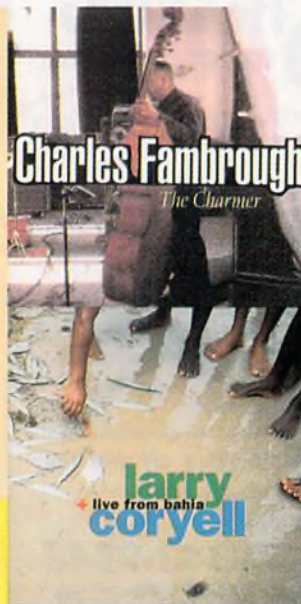
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*Memoirs* serves as a tidy summation of Bley's gifts as an individual and a musical conversationalist. It helps that he converses with old friends. Motian is, roughly, to the drums what Bley is to the piano, capable of sculpting icy, paradoxical emotions; on moment's notice, they can venture "out" where tonal centers and rhythmic pulses are not invited. And there, always, is the fundamental Haden, who demonstrates how a few well-placed notes and well-observed silences can lock a group texture into place. Following the analogy of a painting, Haden is the stretcher bars and the chiaroscuro concurrently.

*Memoirs* is truly a three-pronged affair, featuring more tunes from Motian's vivid pen than the others, as well as songs by Thelonious Monk, Ornette Coleman ("Latin Genetics," a Bley favorite), and Bley and Haden. Motian's "Enough Is Enough" is as touchingly tender as "This Is the Hour" is wit-lined.

One fateful midnight in July of 1976, the tape was running, and the trio of Bley, Peacock, and Altschul went on an artful exploration. Checking back on the reissue of *Japan Suite*, it's refreshing to hear such loose-limbed and unbridled improvisation when the practice is all but an underground—if not lost—art. Bley liberally extends pianistic methods, plucking and treating strings. Musically, he gives structural guideposts along the way, but never to the

# CMP BREAKING DOWN THE BARRIERS IN CONTEMPORARY JAZZ AND WORLD MUSIC

point where an identifiable theme dominates the proceedings and the energy flow. And Altschul tends to want to fill the space rather than carve ideas with those spaces.

*Blues For Red* finds Bley in a solo mode, but rather than plunge into his hot pool of improvisational expression, he focuses tightly on a set of songs—14 of 'em, to be exact. Bley displays concision and quirky poetics on these miniatures. —Josef Woodard



## Gary Burton

**SIX PACK**—GRP GRD 9685: *ANTHEM; SIX PACK; SUMMERTIME; JACK'S THEME; LOST NUMBERS; DOUBLE GUATEMALA; ASPHODEL; REDIAL; INVITATION; MY FUNNY VALENTINE; SOMETHING SPECIAL; GUITARRE PICANTE.* (68:01)

**Personnel:** Burton, vibes; Kurt Rosenwinkel (1,9), B.B. King (2,6), John Scofield (2-4,6), Kevin Eubanks (5), Jim Hall (7,10,11), Ralph Towner (8,12), guitar; Bob Berg, tenor sax; Larry Goldings, keyboards; Mulgrew Miller, piano; Paul Shaffer (2,6), piano, organ; Steve Swallow, Will Lee (2,6), bass; Jack DeJohnette, drums.

★ ★ ★

The last few years have been rich for Gary Burton. His 1990 album *Reunion*, with alumnus Pat Metheny, was a near-masterpiece that showed a new, intelligent mode of pop-jazz—sleek and smart instead of smarmy. His fifth project for GRP, *Six Pack*, poses as something of a retrospective concept album, pairing Burton with guitarists as diverse in age and approach as B.B. King, John Scofield, Kevin Eubanks, his own bandmate and Metheny-surrogate Kurt Rosenwinkel, Jim Hall, and Ralph Towner (the two duets with Towner may be the album's highlights, in terms of empathetic interactivity). But its divergent approach adds up to confusion instead of expansiveness.

More significantly, the package fails to deliver on the front which has marked Burton's work over the years: he has shown a fine ear for a good tune. Here, even Metheny's contribution, "Double Guatemala," seems slapdash, like a hastily scribbled-out blues. All is not lost: Jim Hall's "Something Special" is just that; Burton's title cut is a tart little bit of sneakiness; and Dave Clark's "Asphodel"—a dark bossa-ish lovely—is the best new tune of the bunch, besides being a good vehicle for Hall's glassy mystique.

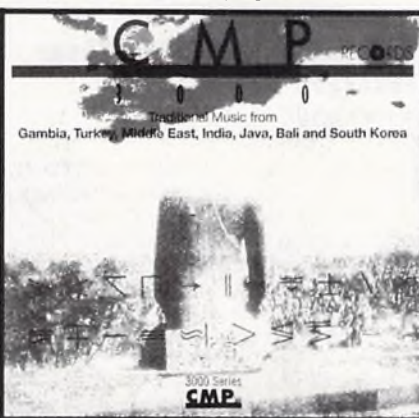
Still, the album desperately needs the kind of oblique beauty that has come out of Vince Mendoza's pen on previous Burton albums. The revisited standards have a mixed effect: the swung "Summertime" works less well than the shuffled "Invitation." —Josef Woodard



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## Diamonds In The Rough

by Owen Cordle

It would be easier to say that Dizzy's *Diamonds—The Best Of The Verve Years* (Verve 314 513 875-2; 72:00/76:00/74:00; ★★★) is a fitting tribute to trumpeter/composer/bandleader Dizzy Gillespie in this, his 75th year. But listening to the three-CD set, reading compiler Kenny Washington's liner-note interview with trumpeter Jon Faddis, and searching your own soul (and record collection) lead elsewhere.

First, there is Washington's organization: one disc each subtitled "Big Bands," "Small Groups & Guests," and "In An Afro-Cuban, Bossa Nova, Calypso Groove." Except for a 1950 Bird-and-Diz version of "Leap Frog," the selections come from 1954-'64, a period when Gillespie's innovative years were past but which includes his fertile middle period. But the performances do not follow chronologically. For the historical record, and considering that most of this material has been unavailable on CD until now, a straight chronology would have been better.

This ties into a second fault: lack of historically comprehensive liner notes. While Faddis'



Dizzy in a box: from brilliant to unexceptional

comments provide insight into Dizzy's personality, groups, and solos, they lack the historical focus that writers like, say, Dan Morgenstern, Leonard Feather, or Gunther Schuller could have brought to this project.

You also wonder at Washington's choices.

One or two performances from each Gillespie album of the time would seem more logical than Washington's method. As it stands, there are, for example, four tunes from the 1957 big band album *Birks' Works* and none from *Perceptions*, an orchestral album composed and arranged by J.J. Johnson; and three tunes from the 1964 album *Jambo Caribe* and none from *An Electrifying Evening With The Dizzy Gillespie Quintet*, surely one of his most exciting sessions. And why did he choose "Take The 'A' Train" from Ella Fitzgerald's *The Duke Ellington Songbook* (with Dizzy sitting in with Duke's band) instead of something from Gillespie's own *Portrait Of Duke Ellington*? And where is something from *Dizzy In Greece*?

The music itself, released not only by Verve but also by Norgran, Limelight, and Philips, ranges from brilliant ("Prelude" and "Africana" from Lalo Schifrin's *Gillespiana* suite; "Dizzy's Blues" from *Dizzy Gillespie At Newport*; "I Know That You Know" from *Sonny Side Up*, with Sonny Rollins and Sonny Stitt on tenor saxophone) to pleasant but unexceptional ("Fiesta Mojo" and "And Then She Stopped" from *Jambo Caribe*).

Overall rating for the music: four stars, mostly due to the big band and all-star dates; for the choice of tunes, organization, and liner notes: two stars. **DB**

Branford Marsalis



Michael Brecker



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## CD REVIEWS



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### David Murray

**SPECIAL QUARTET**—DIW Columbia CK 52955: *COUSIN MARY*; *HOPE/SCOPE*; *LA TINA LEE*; *DEXTER'S DUES*; *IN A SENTIMENTAL MOOD*; *3D FAMILY*. (50:58)

**Personnel:** Murray, tenor sax; McCoy Tyner, piano; Fred Hopkins, bass; Elvin Jones, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ 1/2

No, Murray's not Coltrane. Though in constant lunging forward motion, David's earthbound and without the aura of devotion or ballyhooed purity of purpose that makes Trane a culture hero beyond his time and place.

On the other hand, Murray's one of the fearless few who can withstand and triumph over Elvin's wicked cymbal onslaught or find his way next to McCoy, now out of his dry spell and into new glories. Fred Hopkins is the natural bassist for these three—deeply rooted, always swinging, more pragmatically creative than conventional.

After a juicy "Cousin Mary," Murray rushes into overblown, fragmented, and odd-lengthed phrases on "Hope/Scope." "Tina," a Latinate ballad by Butch Morris, benefits greatly from the Jones-Tyner syncopation treatment; David

manfully squares off in response to McCoy's solo. He squawks breezily through "Dexter's Dues," giving Hopkins a rare chorus. Then he pins his heart to his sleeve for Duke's "Mood" with McCoy alone creating a rangy backdrop (the pianist excels in his own unaccompanied episode). Finally, the quartet stretches to a fade on "3D Family." A special quartet, indeed.

—Howard Mandel



### Robert Cray

**I WAS WARNED**—Mercury 314 512 721: *JUST A LOSER*; *I'M A GOOD MAN*; *I WAS WARNED*; *THE PRICE I PAY*; *WON THE BATTLE*; *ON THE ROAD DOWN*; *A WHOLE LOTTA PRIDE*; *A PICTURE OF A BROKEN HEART*; *HE DON'T LIVE HERE ANYMORE*; *OUT LAST TIME*. (49:28)

**Personnel:** Cray, guitar, vocals; Tim Kaihatsu, guitar; Jim Pugh, keyboards; Kevin Hayes, drums; Karl Sevareid, bass; the Memphis Horns; Andrew Love, tenor sax; Wayne Jackson, trumpet, trombone.

★ ★ ★ 1/2

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Mercury. Cray puts the blues in his back pocket and digs into a more overtly soul-minded approach. As always, Cray favors—and savors—minor-mode tunes, as on the slinky, exotic title cut, with Cray stretching his limber voice over the dark-hued percolations of the rhythm section. "On The Road Down" is a more buoyant tune penned by Cray and soul veteran Steve Cropper, whose Stax/Volt lineage is central to Cray's musical focus this time around.

Generally, the unabashed historicist Cray has got Memphis on his mind this time out. His soulful vocal gymnastics and spiky licks are enveloped in a warm thicket of swirling organ and punctuations from the "Memphis Horns." Cray is still a bluesman suitable for the masses, one who mixes grit with velvet. He's not out to break new ground here, but wants only to put his heartfelt stamp on a tradition that only seems to shine brighter and deeper with age.

—Josef Woodard



## Tribal Tech

**ILLICIT**—Bluemoon R2 79180: *THE BIG WAVE*; *STOOPID*; *BLACK CHERRY*; *TORQUE*; *SLIDIN' INTO CHARLISA*; *ROOT FOOD*; *RIOT*; *PAHA-SAPA*; *BABYLON*; *AFTERMATH*. (63:43)

**Personnel:** Scott Henderson, guitar; Gary Willis, bass; Scott Kinsey, keyboards; Kirk Covington, drums.

★★★★ 1/2

## Mitch Watkins

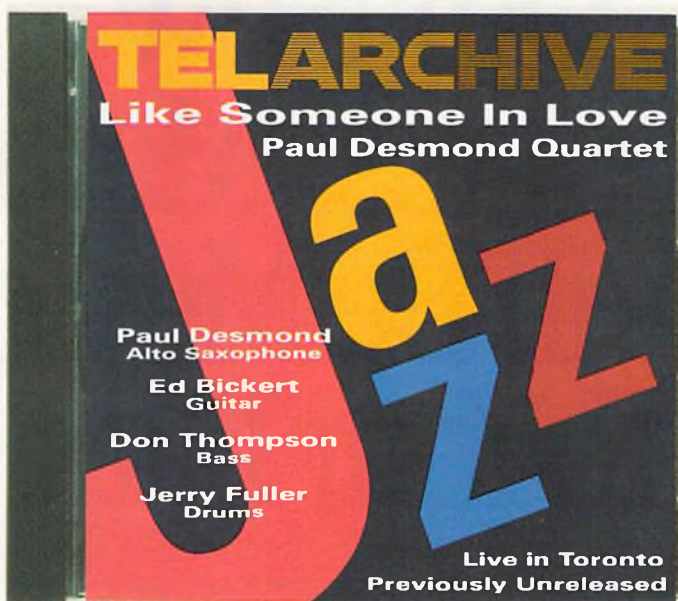
**STRINGS WITH WINGS**—enja R279679: *ZEPHYR*; *ONE LOST LOVE*; *OH HOW WE DANCED*; *MAY YOUR SORROWS PASS*; *MAP OF THE DARK*; *SUSPICION*; *OCTOBER*; *CRAY*; *THE WILDEST FLAME*; *ONLY A MOMENT*. (44:18)

**Personnel:** Watkins, guitar, keyboards; Brannen Temple, drums; Chris Maresh, electric, acoustic basses; Gene Elders, violin; Paul Glasse, mandolin, mandola; Marty Muse, pedal steel guitar; James Fenner, percussion; Scott Laningham, drums (8), percussion (1); Bill Ginn, keyboards (10).

★★★★ 1/2

Scott Henderson hates what passes for fusion today. So to distance himself from the hordes of cheddar-mongers who perpetuate the cheesier aspects of the genre, his *Illicit* bears the following warning sticker: "Contains explicit melodies, suggestive harmony, graphic rhythms."

He mocks the shallowness of happy-jazz on the aptly titled opener, "The Big Wave," a reference to pervasive WAVE-type radio programming. The tune opens on a buoyant note,



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as non-threatening as a child's lullaby. This banality oozes on for about 20 seconds when suddenly Henderson's angry, distortion-laced guitar cuts through the cheese with a vengeance: the perfect punchline to the perfect setup. Henderson's ripping guitar work—uncannily fluid Gambale/Holdsworth-type chops with a mean Stevie Ray Vaughan disposition—is one of the reasons why Tribal Tech is considered far too subversive for fuzak radio-play. Also credit Gary Willis' soloistic approach to the electric bass and drummer Kirk Covington's in-your-face bashing.

Henderson's "Black Cherry" shows the influence of his previous employer Joe Zawinul, while his heavy-handed "Torque" probably owes more of a debt to Deep Purple. His most impressive composition, "Slidin' Into Charlisa," blossoms from a deep, slow blues into a moving, full-blown orchestration, somewhat reminiscent of Jaco Pastorius' "Three Views Of A Secret" with obvious nods to B.B. and Albert King along the way. "Root Food" is a hyper-boogie, sort of ZZ Top meets the Zawinul Syndicate. The most daring pieces, "Riot" and "Aftermath," were group improvisations in the studio during and after the recent riots in Los Angeles, reflecting both the anger and despair of that volatile situation.

Mitch Watkins' *Strings With Wings* is a much more controlled, genteel affair, though he does kick on the distortion pedal and rip it up on the driving "Zephyr" (a sprightly take on John Scofield's "Protocol") and the edgy, odd-metered "The Wildest Flame." A majority of pieces here—"May Your Sorrows Pass," "Oh How We Danced," "Cry," and "Only A Moment"—tend toward the reflective or saccharine side but are far more harmonically sophisticated than the happy-jazz that Henderson mocks. Watkins can burn, as he's proven in past full-tilt outings with Dennis Chambers powering the groove. This time out, he's in more of a composerly mode, and the overall vibe is distinctly more precious.

—Bill Milkowski



## Joe Henderson

**THE STANDARD JOE**—Red 123248: *BLUE BOSSA; INNER URGE; BODY AND SOUL; TAKE THE 'A' TRAIN; ROUND MIDNIGHT; BLUES IN F (IN 'N' OUT); BODY AND SOUL.* (69:51)

**Personnel:** Henderson, tenor sax; Rufus Reid, bass; Al Foster, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

By general consensus, Henderson is the man of the year in jazz, a fully matured and matriculated player whose improvisational skills and—

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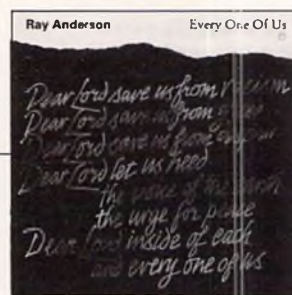
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just as importantly—relaxed powers of invention are in high gear. *Lush Life*, his conceptual tribute to Billy Strayhorn released earlier this year, may have packed more of an all-around punch, but *The Standard Joe* is also a deceptively casual wonder.

Henderson breathes new life, ferocity, and humor into the familiar repertorial turf of "Blue Bossa," "Take The 'A' Train," and "Round Midnight." He serves up 25 minutes worth of spontaneous observations on that tenor saxist's chestnut, "Body And Soul," and realizes the meaning of the title of his own classic, "Inner Urge." Henderson shines in a chordless trio setting, and Rufus Reid provides more of a rock-solid brand of bass foundation than Charlie Haden did on Henderson's last trio album on Red. *An Evening With*.

—Josef Woodard



## Ray Anderson

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**Personnel:** Anderson, trombone, vocals; Simon Nabatov, piano; Charlie Haden, bass; Ed Blackwell, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

Generous doses of bluesy feeling from the 'bonist whose vocal-like style blurs intonation in favor of a strong beat and roughhewn timbral effects. The redoubtable rhythm duo is at its classiest, and Nabatov's a comer with his own ideas ("Garnerish"). Skip Ray in a Connick mode on "Brother" and "Snoo," but dig his pinched tone on "Lady Day" and hearty groove on Trane's "Dear Lord." —Howard Mandel



## Vivino Brothers

**CHITLINS PARMIGIANA**—DMP 492: PEANUT BOSS; GHOST DANCERS; FOOLS GOLD; CAPETOWN FEAR; CHITLINS PARMIGIANA; SOUL REVIVAL; YOU'LL NEVER WALK AGAIN; AFRICA; MISS MONA; JERRY BOY BLUES; LIFE'S TOUGH; CORNELL KNOWLEDGE; WE GOT THE PARTY. (65:51)

**Personnel:** Jerry Vivino, saxes, vocals; Jimmy Vivino, guitars, piano, Hammond B-3, vocals; Michael Merritt, bass; James Wormworth, drums; Vinnie Cutro, trumpet, flugelhorn; Fred Walcott, percussion; Catherine Russell, Johnny Bello (13), vocals; Al Kooper, Hammond B-3 (1,3,7,10-12), Korg M-1 (2); Ronnie Cuber, baritone sax (7,10); Floyd Vivino, piano, vocals (13).

★ ★ ★

Jersey-Italian kin of early Meters/Nevilles and jump bands like Roomful Of Blues, the Vivino Brothers expose their own family values. The section work's tight; rhythms solid, even swinging; soloists get fired up, and the singers refer to p.c. topics without losing the party imperative. Al Kooper and Brother Jimmy's B-3 add flavor to the charts, though the melodies are more generic than r&b has to be. The recording is almost counter-productively clean. —H.M.



## Tim Laughlin

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**Personnel:** Laughlin, clarinet; Connie Jones, cornet, vocal; Al Barthlow, trombone; Tom Fischer, tenor sax; John Royen, piano; Hank Mackie, acoustic guitar; Jim Black, bass; Hal Smith, drums.

★ ★ ★

Honest, modest, concise trad with a nod to Bob Crosby's front line, *New Orleans' Own* has crisp rhythm arrangements and very fine sound. Laughlin's smoothly appealing low register and confident piping highs are spotlit; he plays a flowing line. The band is coherent, seldom loose, never raw; members have worked with Teagarden, Hirt, Fountain, Hackett, Preservation Hall. "Wonderful World" is sugary, but Laughlin, the youngest Duke of Dixieland.

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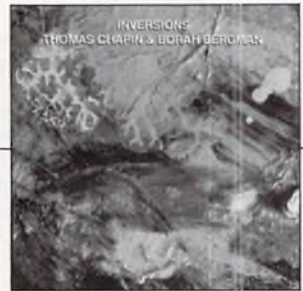
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**Personnel:** Chapin, alto sax, saxello; Bergman, piano.

★ ★ ★

*Inversions* exudes thorny, fierce, all-out blowing (direct-to-two-track) from serious, well-prepared New York free improvisers. Bergman has the hands of an eccentric genius. Chapin a sea creature's lungs and chops of steel. They're fast on each other's moves to the edge of sane musical play and over. But I find I'm decreasingly in the mood to follow. —H.M.



## Mark Helias

**ATTACK THE FUTURE**—enja 70192: *GNOMESWALK; HANDS OFF; KNITTING OR QUITTING; MUDPIE ANTHEM; JACQUES; BEAU REGARD.* (61:43)

**Personnel:** Helias, bass; David Lopato, piano; Michael Moore, clarinet, bass clarinet, alto sax; Tom Rainey, drums, percussion; Herb Robertson, cornet, trumpet, flugelhorn.

★ ★ ★ ★ 1/2

Ambitious originality—and something to say—characterize the compositions of Helias, a bassist as at home walkin' the blues as conjugating abstractions with Braxton. Gutsy, sensitive virtuosity marks his full-fledged collaborators, too. Robertson and Moore twine like ivy; Lopato is witty, flinty, energized; Rainey's a stickler. The 26-minute, seven-part "Knitting" suite faces timely economic/esthetic questions, yet remains enjoyable. Attention, Art Ensemble fans, to "Mudpie." —H.M.

## 1 Tuck & Patti

"They Can't Take That Away From Me" (from *LOVE WARRIORS, Windham Hill Jazz*) Patti Cathcart, vocals; Tuck Andress, guitar.

I don't know who this is. I like the sound of guitar and voice together. She's a fine singer and he's a wonderful guitarist. I thought that sometimes, though, she was trying to make more of the song than there really was. I think the problem for the young singers, the new crowd, is that they need some new repertoire. This song has been sung many, many times, and it's a nice song. But this is 1992 and there are other things to sing about. I think young singers today should strive to add something to the repertoire and not sing these old standards, which are great . . . but they have been done and done and done. She had a lovely sound, though. 3 stars.

## 2 Helen Merrill

"Willow Weep For Me" (from *CLEAR OUT OF THIS WORLD, Antilles*) Merrill, vocals; Roger Kellaway, piano; Red Mitchell, bass; Terry Clarke, drums; Wayne Shorter, tenor sax.

Same thing. If it was an original song, it would be excellent . . . if it wasn't heard already. But the great singers have sung this song and there's nothing more you can really do to it. She's got a lovely sound, she sings in tune, but . . . what can you do with "Willow Weep For Me"? Besides, I wish the young women would look for something else to sing other than songs about unrequited love, love in spite of love, and all of this miserable, masochistic expression. There are other things to sing about with a man and a woman. It's not all tragedy, you know? We deserve some more material. 3 stars.

## 3 Cassandra Wilson

"Woman On The Edge" (from *JUMP WORLD, JMT*) Wilson, vocals; Kevin Bruce Harris, bass; Mark Johnson, drums; David Gilmore, guitar; Rod Williams, keyboards; Gary Thomas, tenor sax; Graham Haynes, trumpet.

Is that Cassandra? She's got her own sound, but you can also hear how she comes out of Betty [Carter]. I liked it but I thought that in the mix . . . there was too much bass there. It was disturbing to me . . . the bass booming all the time so I didn't understand everything she said. Also, the singers, a lot of them nowadays, they don't pay as much attention to clarity when it comes to the lyric as the old masterful singers did. You'd hear every word because it's a story that you're telling. On this, I heard a phrase here or there, but I couldn't follow the story that

## by Bill Milkowski

## ABBEY LINCOLN

**B**orn Anna Maria Wooldridge in 1930, she blossomed into Abbey Lincoln and began making her mark in the jazz world in the late 1950s through her work with such giants as Benny Carter, Coleman Hawkins, Sonny Rollins, Kenny Dorham, and Max Roach, whom she married in 1962. She appeared opposite Sidney Poitier in 1964's *Nothing But A Man* and 1968's *For Love Of Ivy*, but didn't act again until 1990's *Mo' Better Blues*, Spike Lee's attempt at a "jazz film."

Throughout her career, Abbey has brought a compelling presence and intense soul to her music, while conveying a sense of thoughtfulness, social relevance, and intelligence in her lyrics. Last year saw the release of *You Gotta Pay The Band*, her second Verve album and the title of a documentary of her life which aired on PBS during Black History



Month. Her latest on Verve is *Devil's Got Your Tongue* (a January release). This was her first Blindfold Test.

well because there was so much music. And her voice doesn't get through the electric instruments that well. To me, acoustic music is really real. But . . . to each his own. 4 stars for the original composition.

## 4 Rickie Lee Jones

"Spring Can Really Hang You Up The Most" (from *POP POP, Warner Bros.*) Jones, vocals; Charlie Haden, bass; Robben Ford, guitar.

Hahaah! . . . I like her sound. I don't know who she is but she's got a style of her own. I like her. I like the way she reads the lyric. She doesn't sound like anybody that I know. She sings with feeling and an understanding of what she's saying. She's original and sincere. I believe that she's really hurting. She sounds vulnerable. I liked that a lot. 5 stars . . . plus. But I still feel the same way about it . . . some new material. I don't know why the singers are pouring over all this old stuff.

## 5 Betty Carter

"In The Still Of The Night" (from *IT'S NOT ABOUT THE MELODY, Verve*) Carter, vocals; Cyrus Chestnut, piano; Ariel J. Roland, bass; Lewis Nash, drums.

That's Betty! All you gotta hear is the first bar, the first note . . . you know it's Betty.

She's got a style all her own, total individuality, personality, and a sound that's her own. She's an original, and that's what this music is supposed to be about. She's great. And she always finds great, young musicians. These musicians are all excellent; but they would be, working with Betty. I love it. 10 stars.

## 6 Carmen Lundy

"As One" (from *MOMENT TO MOMENT, Arabesque*) Lundy, vocals; Onaje Allan Gumbs, keyboards; Chico Freeman, tenor sax; Kenny Davis, bass; Buddy Williams, drums.

She sounds a bit like Dionne Warwick. It's also got a tinge of Donny Hathaway. She's a fine ballad singer. You can understand every word she sings, and she's telling a story. You can follow it, and it's very pleasing. 5 stars.

## 7 Robin Holcomb

"Iowa Lands" (from *ROCKABYE, Elektra Nonesuch*) Holcomb, piano, vocals; Doug Wieselman, clarinet, tenor; Guy Klucevsek, accordion; Dave Hofstra, tuba; Danny Frankel, drums.

Wow! That sounds like Eartha Kitt. Is that her? I bet she likes Eartha. Is she European? She's a very fine singer, whoever she is. I like the arrangement. It's different, you know? She gave us some nice images in the arrangement. Beautiful. 5 stars. DB