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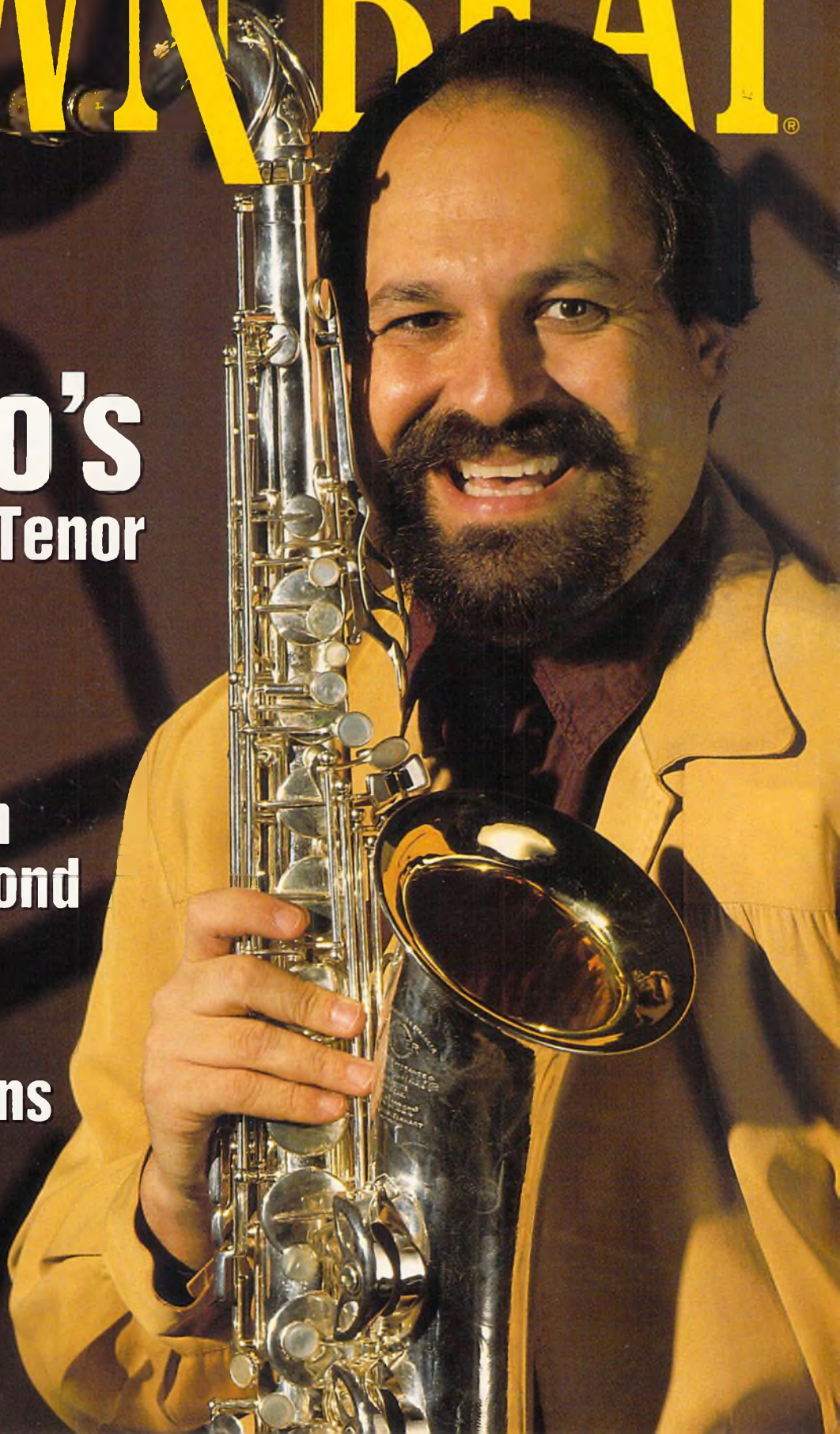
Joe Lovano's Big-Hearted Tenor

Steve Turre's
Shell Games

'Smitty' Smith
& Ray Drummond

Lyle Mays

Pinetop Perkins





Shellman Steve Turre & son Orion

MITCHELL SEIDEL

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Cover photograph by Teri Bloom.

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By Howard Mandel

Joe Lovano's Sound of the Broad Shoulders



TERI BLOOM

Joe Lovano has a sound. It's a broad-shouldered, hairy-chested, and tenderhearted sound, able to bear responsibilities in big hands as well as in trios, in long-term collaborations as well as in his own more recently convened ensembles. It's a sound equally applicable to companionably interactive play and true passion without lapses into forced urgency. Lovano's sound on tenor sax, especially—but on alto, soprano, flute, and the clarinet family, too—has quietly become a keynote of the '90s.

Joe now seems to be heard everywhere—in John Scofield's quartet, in Paul Motian's trio, in Charlie Haden's Liberation Music Orchestra, the Village Vanguard Monday Night Band, and the Smithsonian Institution's jazz repertory band, with Dave Holland and Billy Higgins at a memorial service for revered drummer Ed Blackwell, on hot sessions for other strong leaders, and with his most ambitious album yet, *Universal Language*, following two well-received productions, *From The Soul* and *Landmarks*, all for Blue Note Records (see "Reviews" Sept. '92, Oct. '91). Lovano's sound is the sound of compassion, of hard-won, fully earned accomplishment, and dependably professional maturity. No wonder in these bottom-line '90s, Joe Lovano is the man.

"I'm just trying to play, to find myself, and get next to my sound," Lovano says, earnest and soft-spoken about the mission he's taken for life. Thoughtful, modest, lately turned 40, Lovano has jazz in his

"Jazz is a very social music;
it's a lot about your
contemporaries and how everybody
feeds off each other."



blood. His father, Tony "Big T" Lovano, was a tenorist (with whom Joe recorded the satisfying *Hometown Sessions* in '86, not quite a year before he died), a central figure in the organ combos and progressive bop sessions that characterized the Cleveland scene. Joe's uncle played horn, too, and his brother Anthony is a drummer. Music is the heritage of their Sicilian family, but jazz—make that *modern jazz*—is the special love of its American generations. Furthermore, Joe's wife Judi Silvano (nee Silverman) is a professional vocalist with a soprano's range, and on *Universal Language* she offers wordless lines that wrap around Joe's themes and discursions as tightly as Irene Abei's cling to soprano saxist Steve Lacy's.

Not that Joe's gone quite so European as the Paris-based Lacy, but he's still exploratory and expansive. Though he's worked (even as a teenager) and studied (at Berklee) and reapplied himself (in bands led by organists Lonnie Smith and Jack McDuff and Herdsman Woody Herman since arriving in New York in the mid-'70s) to the jazz tradition's core, he's open to whatever is genuine and substantial, to whatever leads him closer to the answer to his big question: "Who is Joe Lovano?" Music frames his ongoing investigation.

"I've primarily been focused on tenor as my main voice since I was 12 years old, but I started on alto when I was a kid. And playing with Blackwell during the last few years of his life really brought that back to me," Joe says. Drums and drummers are vital to him, as they are to any jazz player; he keeps a traps set ready in his Chelsea loft, and he considers veteran Detroit/Cleveland rhythmist Lawrence Jacktown Jackson as well as youthful Billy Stewart important associates. Blackwell, best known for drumming with Ornette Coleman's circle of improvisers—though he recorded with John Coltrane, Eric Dolphy, David Murray, and Archie Shepp, too—

profoundly underscores Lovano throughout *From The Soul*, besides attending Holland and pianist Michel Petrucciani, whom he'd never previously met. Blackwell is also vital to Joe's recently released *Sounds Of Joy* with bassist Anthony Cox. Lovano lauds Blackwell's effect.

"He was a treasure in music, and an inspiration to me. Musicians like Blackwell, who are completely original and have 40 years of recorded music in their life, really get me deep into who I am.

"I've played in a lot of bands, and I always try to find something new with the people who are right there at that moment. That's what keeps music fresh, for me. Playing with people who are their own players—like Blackwell—taught me how to find myself. I've been with Paul Motian since 1981, and joined the Mel Lewis band in '80. Being with both those drummers for 10 years, touring and everything, has been fantastic. It's grounded me in an awareness of interplay, of being creative with the other people rather than just playing my horn.

"To be an honest musician, you play from your history. As your experiences grow, the music comes out. All my favorite players developed like that. Of course, we play from the history of the music around us, too. But *your* history, what *you* experience, is what really comes out if you can get deep inside yourself, the music and the personalities of the people you play with, and not just treat your instrument like a technical thing."

Nobody's likely to accuse Lovano of being a technique head. His mastery of his horns and reeds, the perfection of his intonation and articulation, the fluency of his fingerings and phrases is unquestionable, but so is his commitment to playing feelings rather than licks or chops. The point is that Joe's experiences give him new ideas about expressing feelings, rather than simply refining his cool skills. Even his years in big bands emerge in personal ways, as becomes evident with the advent of *Universal Language*.

"Doing stuff with Carla Bley—I toured with her in '83 for a year—and Charlie's [Haden] band, which I joined in '87, and with Bob Brookmeyer in Mel's band, has helped my ensemble writing to come out a little more," Lovano explains. "*Universal Language* features a little larger ensemble with Judi's soprano voice, trumpet by Tim Hagans, Kenny Werner on piano, Jack DeJohnette on drums, Charlie Haden and Steve Swallow on some pieces together, and Scott Lee playing bass, too. It has directions and influences from all the periods of my musical growth.

"Charlie's band and Carla's band were really fun because they were looser, more open. You not only had to play your part as written but there are places in the music to create your own part. Those are concepts I'm putting into my music.

"Then, the whole idea of playing in ensembles and blending with other horns, that's the most important thing of working in big bands, I think. A lot of the great players from the history of jazz had that one common thread, that they all played in bigger groups with five and six saxophone players. They were all in each other's face. They didn't want to sound like each other, you know, and they'd say, 'Oh, yeah, you thought *that* was bad? Check *this* out!' They had that attitude, and that's how I grew up, playing with my dad, and playing with Woody's band and the Mel Lewis band.

"I think young players who don't have that experience miss something in their playing. They just stand there and play by themselves—they don't play with a sense of ensemble. I want to have that ensembleness in my playing even when I'm playing a duet with somebody. In my solo projects, when I accompany myself on percussion as I'm playing tenor, there's some of that, too. I'm playing with an ensemble attitude even when I play alone. That definitely comes from playing in big bands."

Solo projects where he accompanies himself on percussion—gongs and rattles et al.—while playing tenor?

"I want to play some modern jazz....
And I mean *today's* modern....
I want to play in bands that
project *tomorrow*, but are today,
really today."



Oh, yes, some of *Universal Language* is like that. After all, as a Midwesterner growing up with a tenor saxist for a dad in the '60s, Lovano was privy to Sonny Stitt, Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis, Harold Vick in Shirley Scott's band, Dizzy Gillespie with James Moody, and records of classic horn men like Lester Young. But there were more experimental expressions also in the air.

"I heard some of the solo records of Roscoe Mitchell and Joseph Jarman that I really dug, and solo works of Anthony Braxton—they were improvisers, they were playing. Albert Ayler was from Cleveland, and he had a lot of followers, so I was around some of those pioneers of free-jazz as a kid, attending some of their concerts.

"I never heard Albert himself, but I grew up on the music of Coltrane's bands, and Miles' bands, and Ornette's bands, and the players who played with them through all their different periods," he elaborates. "The way Billy Higgins and Scott LaFaro and Charlie Haden played, and Philly Joe Jones and Max Roach's band with Clifford Jordan and Art Blakey's bands—they're all part of my history. You might say you hear something in my playing with Scofield that comes out of Ornette, but remember: all those bands were digging and influencing each other, too.

"That was a beautiful period for creative music, given the interplay among all the players in those different groups. All the things Sonny Rollins did, Wayne Shorter, Dewey Redman, Don Cherry, Freddie Hubbard, Bobby Hutcherson, [Eric] Dolphy—every record seemed to have a lot of personality in it. Jazz is a very social music; it's a lot about your contemporaries and how everybody feeds off each other. I know Coltrane played how he did because of how Sonny was playing down the street. I really try to feel that now. Here Jackie McLean is, playing at the Vanguard, while I'm with Scofield at Sweet Basil. That means something to me that's going to be in my attitude all week.

"And the Brecker Brothers at the Blue Note—it's a different kind of music, but the energy is there. Their band is really arranged. They get into different aspects of interplay within the solo spaces, though it's not as open a concept as what we're playing with John. Still, Mike's created a voice for a generation of musicians. I've always dug his playing. He's a good friend of mine. And it means something that he and Randy are playing during the same week I am.

"See, I want to play some modern jazz. I feel that that's the music from the period that's really inspiring to me. And I mean *today's* modern. It's got to do with the way I play and the way people around me improvise together, but it's a growth from what modern jazz *was*; and modern jazz from the '60s to me was a growth from the history of jazz to that point. It didn't stop there. I think it still can carry through.

"I want to play in bands that project *tomorrow*, but are today, *really* today. I'd say the Motian trio plays some modern jazz. Bill Frisell is a complete improviser, one of the most creative players today. The trio has developed the most incredible repertoire of music, standard tunes and a lot of Monk, Paul's compositions and some of Bill's and my own. Paul plays with a complete sense of



TERI BLOOM

EQUIPMENT

"I play a Selmer balanced-action tenor that my father bought in the late '40s and that I've had since I was 15." Joe Lovano says with real warmth for his main instrument. "Recently, I acquired a Conn Chu Berry model which I play, too. They're completely different, the key heights and everything mechanical as well as the way they feel. But I enjoy the difference, and that's why I'm playing both horns.

"The Conn is really open and sits higher up; my left hand is in front of my face on the Conn, where on the Selmer it's down. So the sound comes off the horn differently. The Conn is like an old Cadillac, and the Selmer's a Ferrari. A lot of cats shy away from playing different horns, but my attitude is about *becoming* each note I play, and when you switch between different horns you can't just pick one up and blow, like on automatic pilot. First, you've got to get next to it."

Lovano plays a mouthpiece of grenadilla that's handmade in Brussels by Francois Louis, modeled after a 10-star Otto Link (he played one of those for 10 years). He imports his Prestini #4 reeds from France, having previously played La Voz. And Joe plays a Conn 6M alto sax—"with the lady engraved on the bell"—using a nine-star metal Otto Link mouthpiece; a Mark VI Selmer soprano sax with a silver Louis mouthpiece; also flute, clarinet, alto clarinet, bass clarinet, gongs and diverse rhythm instruments. When performing, Joe uses a Shure SM98 Radio Transmitter clip-on condenser microphone.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE—Blue Note 99830	IT SHOULD'VE HAPPENED A LONG TIME AGO—ECM 823 641
SOUNDS OF JOY—enja 7013 (w/Ed Blackwell & Anthony Cox)	BILL EVANS—JMT 834 445
FROM THE SOUL—Blue Note 98636	with others
LANDMARKS—Blue Note 96108	DREAM KEEPER—Blue Note 95474 (Charlie Haden's LMO)
HOMETOWN SESSIONS—JLS 0001	NIGHTTOWN—Blue Note 98689 (Don Grolnick)
VILLAGE RHYTHM—Soul Note 121 182	SEQUESTERED DAYS—enja 6094 2 (Gust Tsilis)
TONES, SHAPES & COLORS—Soul Note 121 132	THE DEFINITIVE THAD JONES, VOLS. 1, 2—MusicMasters 5024, 5046 (Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra)
with Paul Motian	SOFT LIGHTS AND HOT MUSIC—MusicMasters 5012 (Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra)
ONE TIME OUT—Soul Note 121 244	ACTOR-ACTRESS—Ken 004 (Salvatore Bonafede)
ON BROADWAY VOLS. 1, 2—JMT 834 430, 834 440	
MOTIAN IN TOKYO—JMT 849 154	
JACK OF CLUBS—Soul Note 121 124	
MONK IN MOTIAN—JMT 834 421	

adventure and exploration, letting every sound and everything around him come through his playing into the music. That's what improvising is, for me. It's listening and reacting.

“One thing I want to put together in my playing is the collective inspiration from the history of jazz up until today. So I'm not just playing a style of bebop or fusion or hard-bop, or recreating a period of swing—but instead, incorporating what swing means to me. How bebop comes through *my* language, how the Modern Jazz Quartet's classical approach and really hard-swinging blues come through *my* playing.

“When you're young you focus on some things you like. That's how you play, that's the world you try to live in. But as you grow as a player, you start to combine all the different attitudes, if you're open to that. I want to grow and change and develop my ideas with everything that inspires me.

“I've always been cross-generational, but I'm speaking of international influences, too. This last year I've played in Chile, I've been in Europe a bunch of times, played all over Japan and Hong Kong. The different flavors of the countries and their people—if you let all that influence you, your music can go anywhere. That's what Duke Ellington did, and look at all the beautiful music he gave us. To respect different cultures and let all peoples into your life to influence you is a rich thing—it filters in through *my* music, for sure. I don't ever want to lose that. That's why I love living in New York City.”

Maybe it's not for everyone. Nor can every good player immerse him or herself in every aspect of performance and presentation, as Lovano has. Partially funded by National Endowment for the Arts jazz grants, he's staged two “these are my influences, this is my music” concerts, parlaying the one in Cleveland into an evening presented by the Tri-C Jazz Festival and eventually broadcast over

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National Public Radio. "As a musician, you have to create your own gigs," Lovano believes. "Musicians and artists have to be really involved in what they're doing. Then it will mean something. And I think if you are involved in the whole presentation of what you're doing, rather than waiting for the phone to ring, you're going to be able to do more things you wanted to do.

"Chick Corea's done that. Jack DeJohnette's like that, too. The deeper you're involved, the deeper you're going to play. It inspires me, especially when I get things planned and then see them running smoothly.

"Personally, I want to try to get deep inside myself through music. That's it. It's a deep love my father had and gave to me. He did warn me of the pitfalls. He was a barber as well as a musician. His situation was always changing—he'd be playing around town five nights, two nights, three nights. I saw firsthand that the money was always light, that you had to deal with all these sad cats, club owners or whoever. But somehow, he'd always take his horn out to

play down in the basement, and all that other stuff would go away. "And for me, that's what I wanted to do. I'd hear my dad practice when I was a kid, and all I wanted to do was create that sound myself.

"It's a hard life out here. You have to be strong, you have to be organized, you've got to be on top of a lot of stuff. But I think the musicians who are really involved in their careers and the directions they go in are going to be able to live a life in music."

Coming from Joe Lovano—who's planning his next special project as a blowing session with orchestrations and compositions by Gunther Schuller, who's producing music by Judi Silvano for release on his own JSL label, who's proud to be in Paul Motian's trio and celebrating its 10th anniversary, who looks forward to his quartet's annual February week at the Vanguard, and his spring tour through the U.S. with Scofield's quartet, not to mention his own autumn tour of Europe—a life in music sounds like a worthy pursuit. It's already proved to be an attainable goal. **DB**

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Sanctified Sound

STEVE TURRE

By Pat Cole

"When my sound is right, all kinds of ideas just pop out of my head. But when it's not, then I'm focusing on the sound, and it takes away from my concentration and flow. I can play as many notes as I want, but it's the sound that's critical."



Never lose respect for your elders—especially in public. On a chilly night last December at Carnegie Hall, Steve Turre saw that rule broken. As a member of the Carnegie Hall Jazz Band, he watched the trumpet duel of the year—Jon Faddis and Roy Hargrove—from his seat in the trombone section. With unbridled passion, Hargrove started out with a Wynton-nesque improvisation that had left some gasping. But from there on, Faddis' searing melodies, blasted into the rafters, went unmatched by Hargrove. Turre saw it coming. He grinned during the exchange.

"You don't mess with someone like Faddis," Turre says a few days later in his cramped dressing room above the *Saturday Night Live* set, another place where the

talented brass man works in relative obscurity. "He'll hit some high notes on you that'll sound like a dog whistle."

Steve Turre can blow with the best of them, but he is a musician acutely aware of his influences and what role they have had in shaping his career. They range from the late trumpeter Woody Shaw to McCoy Tyner. And when it comes to J.J. Johnson, Turre speaks with almost papal reverence about the man he edged out in the 1990 *Down Beat* Readers Poll in the trombone category.

Turre can still vividly recall the moment he heard the news. "I was very surprised and happy about the award," he recalls. "I was driving in my car, and my wife called and told me, 'You've got a fax!'" That fax was from the legendary trombone master him-

self. "That really meant something to me, the fact that it was J.J. who heard about it and faxed his congratulations to me. That meant more than all the money in the bank. And then he came back and won the honor the following year," Turre mentions with a humble smile.

No matter. Turre has been busy making his own trails, which some young trombonist currently in training might dare to follow sometime in the 21st century. With his latest solo recording, *Sanctified Shells*, he ventures into territory where few, if any, brass players have ever gone before: making jazz with sea shells. Twelve years in the making, Turre tried out various combinations of shells and ensembles before going into the studio to lay down his songs on tape.



JAMES F. QUINN

"Everything happens for a reason," Turre says during a meal of Indian food at Nirvana, a popular Manhattan restaurant with a captivating view of Central Park trimmed by red and white taillights. "The time it took me to put this together allowed me to carry out different ideas." The result is a recording that takes the listener on a journey through a variety of musical styles: from African rhythms, to Indian melodies, to Latin harmonies. But why in the world would one of jazz's best trombone players resort to shells to find another voice? The way Turre sees it, the shell and the animal horn are the roots of all brass instruments. "These ancient instruments are played the exact same way modern brass instruments are—by vibrating the lips, by blowing through a tube or chamber," Turre explains.

His quest for shell sounds began while playing with Rahsaan Roland Kirk in 1970, when he was a budding 20-year-old musician. Rahsaan, as Turre recalls, was playing at San Francisco's Both/And Club. During the set, Kirk would play a call, or the key tone on a shell. "The sound of this one note really affected me," Turre says, "and I noticed the effect it had on the audience as well." So Kirk asked Turre if he would play his shell. Turre tried it and soon acquired his

first shell.

Turre, who is of Mexican-American descent, also discovered that his ancestors played the shells. During a tour date in Mexico City with Woody Shaw in 1978, a relative took him to a museum and showed him a shell instrument used by the Aztecs. He began acquiring more shells after that.

Through experimentation he learned he could change the pitch of the shell's sound by inserting his hand into it. But to get different sounds, he realized that you needed different sized shells—the bigger the shell, the lower the pitch. Over the years, touring with bands such as the Timeless All-Stars and Shaw's band, Turre criss-crossed the world, collecting shells from three continents.

"You got to get that perfect specimen, and then you cut it down with a hacksaw," Turre explains. "I cut a mouthpiece onto the surface, and I file it down. I try to make it so that my lip is touching the shell."

After persuading various musicians he worked with over the years to try to play shells, Turre was able to assemble a band, each of whom could double, for the recording of *Sanctified Shells*. Robin Eubanks, Reynaldo Jorge, Clifton Anderson, and Doug Purviance make up both the trombone section and the shell choir. The members of the

rhythm section—bassist Andy Gonzalez, conga player Milton Cardona, and percussionists Ignacio Berroa and Herman Riley—also play shells, as do trumpeters Charlie Sepulveda and Dizzy Gillespie. Even Turre's mother, Carmen, is heard playing castanets and shells.

Turre quickly explains that including his 70-year-old mother on a song wasn't a pure case of nepotism. "My mother was a professional flamenco dancer," Turre points out. "And I had always heard her playing the castanets. When it came down to recording the album, I asked her to play, and she said, 'No.' But I showed her the song, and she came in and took care of business!"

"She had known Dizzy for awhile," Turre continues with a slight smile, "and she had a ball during the recording. My father called after it was over and told me she'd said it added 10 years to her life."

After playing scores of recording sessions, Turre learned how to be organized, meticulous, and methodical in the studio. He recorded *Sanctified Shells* in three days. "Mixing the album was a real challenge," he says. "The sound of the shells moves the needles on the recording equipment into the red zone very easily. But once we got that adjusted, then we were rollin'."

It's no wonder that his last album—and his first for Antilles—*Right There* (a phrase that Turre's daughter would repeat over and again) garnered strong reviews. His chops and musicianship on the album even caught the eye of the unjazzy *People* magazine, which called him "one of the most accomplished and distinctive trombonists of his generation."

Turre almost blushes a little when you mention the glowing adjectives in his reviews. "When I make a record, it stands for all time," he says. "It represents your artistry. *Right There* is an extension of *Fire & Ice* [his debut, recorded for Stash]. Instead of using a string quartet as I did in that album, on *Right There* I used a sextet with a violin on top, a cello on the bottom, and a trombone. It's an unusual voicing, but it rocks."

Another of Turre's mentors, trombonist Slide Hampton, also has praise for him. "Steve is one of the most important trombone players around because of the different ways he has of approaching improvisations and in playing patterns. He's also very serious about musical development and he's worked very hard at playing both the trombone and other instruments. I've been with him when he's played tenor sax, bass trombone, and the shells."

And yet to the public at large, Turre isn't seen by most people performing blistering solos or making passionate shell music.

Many people identify him as the trombone player for the Saturday Night Live Band, which he joined in 1986. Like many jazz musicians, Turre faces a common dilemma: while jazz is where his heart is, he must play commercially oriented music to pay the bills. The *SNL* contract has enabled Turre to buy a home in suburban New Jersey. But Turre makes it clear that playing jazz live is his first love.

"*Saturday Night Live* gives me financial stability, so that I can be more discriminating and the important engagements I do aren't chosen for a financial reason. It's more for my career and the direction in which I want to go."

Saturday Night Live takes up an entire Saturday. Rehearsals begin at 11 a.m., with a break at around 3 p.m. By 7:30 p.m., the band, led by guitarist G.E. Smith, practices the opening of the show beginning with the theme song. Turre plays the song effortlessly; he could almost do it in his sleep. Still, he gets a charge out of doing live television. "It's the real deal," Turre says at the end of the opening monolog. "You can't screw up, the camera is watching you."

"I like performing live, that's my first love," he added. "As far as being a studio musician, doing jingles and that kind of stuff, I don't like it. In fact, I'm not about that, and I never was. I've always played for people. That's always been a part of my life."

Besides the *SNL* gig, Turre teaches at William Paterson College and the Manhattan School of Music. And then there are gigs, gigs, and more gigs. As an A-list trombonist, Turre is constantly playing with his band, or with the Leaders, Dizzy Gillespie, the Timeless All-Stars, Lester Bowie's Brass Fantasy, or teaching a clinic. The phone calls don't stop. He carries a Sharp Wizard pocket organizer where he can punch up names and numbers in a flash if he needs a sideman.

Turre, a California native, found his way to jazz when he was a student at Acalanes and Lafayette high schools in the San Francisco area. His father, a gynecologist, gave him an appreciation for big-band music. His Mexican-American mother put an affinity for Latin music in his genes. But it was his discovery of J.J. Johnson that changed his musical direction.

"J.J. did the trombone what [John] Coltrane did for the saxophone," says Turre. "If you're talking about playing in the modern world, that level still stands and has yet to be equalled by anybody. He's like what Michael Jordan is to basketball."

The last thing Turre wanted to do was join the marching band in high school. So he joined the football team, which exempted him from it. He was such a good wide receiver that he won a football scholarship to



"I like performing live, that's my first love. As far as being a studio musician, doing jingles and that kind of stuff, I don't like it. . . . I've always played for the people. That's always been a part of my life."



Sacramento State. But he realized that he wasn't getting the music training he wanted. He later transferred to North Texas State, which had a good rep as a jazz boot camp. But that turned sour. Besides experiencing racism, the program, Turre believed, was more geared to turning out speed-oriented players.

So once again, Turre dropped out and returned to the Bay Area in 1970 to work at the Both/And Club. That led to road and studio gigs with Van Morrison and Ray Charles in '72. He also got a teaching position at the Odyssey School in Berkeley, Calif. While there, he linked up with Woody Shaw. From there, he went on to record with Pharoah Sanders, Kirk, Chico Hamilton, Cedar Walton, and McCoy Tyner.

Throughout Turre's musical career, composing and arranging has been important to him. "I began composing in high school," he says. "On all my records, I've done the arranging. The other half is the composing. I like writing, but I like playing more. I'm going to get more into writing in the future." One of his primary writing and composing tools is a piano at his home studio, but he's looking for a synthesizer/note-processing-software setup. "I sometimes compose with the trombone or the bass."

Yet for all his accomplishments, Turre is still pushing for perfection on the trombone. With a busy schedule, much of his practice on technique and melody takes place during live performances. When he has some down time, he squeezes in practices before a recording session at home.

While his peers praise him as a leading trombonist, Turre is "trying to develop my sound and resonance," he says without reservation. "When my sound is right, all kinds of ideas just pop out of my head. But when it's not, then I'm focusing on the sound, and it takes away from my concentration and flow. I can play as many notes as I want, but it's the sound that's critical."

Turre is already thinking about the sounds of the next recording and what he would like to do next. Most important to him is working with his own band. "I don't want to work with one group all the time," he adds. "That way, you grow more." After *Sanctified Shells*, Turre believes he's prepared to create a unique voice among brass players. "I feel like I'm on the threshold of breaking loose, conceptually," he says.

But Steve Turre will always remember those who helped him get there, too. **DB**

EQUIPMENT

Steve Turre's primary instrument is a Yamaha YSL 491-508 bore 'bone. He uses a Stork custom-made mouthpiece, and for muffled sound, he has a Humes & Berg stone-lined pixie straight mute. He uses no pickups in the studio. "I prefer to play

acoustically," he says.

When he plays shell music, Turre uses a fleet of 40 shells that he has collected around the globe. He has 20 shells that have yet to be made into instruments.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader

SANCTIFIED SHELLS—Antilles 314 514 186
RIGHT THERE—Antilles 314 510 040
FIRE & ICE—Stash 275
VIEWPOINT—Stash 270

with various others

DEDICATION—JMT/Polygram 834 433 (Robin Eubanks)
LIVE AT THE ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL—enja 79658 (Dizzy Gillespie)
TURNING POINT—Verve 3007 (McCoy Tyner)
TIME FOR—Early Bird 101 (Timeless All-Stars)

Rhythm Leaders

RAY DRUMMOND & MARVIN "SMITTY" SMITH

By Mitchell Seidel



PHOTOS BY MITCHELL SEIDEL

During the 1980s, people on the New York jazz scene must have thought Ray Drummond and Marvin "Smitty" Smith worked only in tandem. By luck or design, they always seemed to be working together in someone else's group. Drummond, 15 years Smith's senior, was the first on the New York scene, settling on the East Coast in 1977 after a brief stint in music and the corporate world in California.

The effervescent Smith, whose conversa-

tion has as much energy as his playing, entered the profession at 14, which means he's been in it about as long as Drummond, who labels himself "a late starter."

Although they've played with everyone from Wynton and Branford Marsalis to Art Farmer to David Murray, one area of their resumes is somewhat empty, one that reads "leader." Both are just now beginning to explore that avenue in greater depth, with about a half-dozen albums between them

under their own names.

The two were recently in the recording studio yet again for Drummond's first release on Arabesque, *Excursion*, and performed together at the Village Vanguard during Ray's first gig there as a leader. Smith, while known in a variety of acoustic settings and as a leader on two of his own Concord Jazz albums, is leading an "electric" band that features sax, guitar, keyboards, bass, and drums on gigs around New York.

MITCHELL SEIDEL: *How many times do you think you two have worked together since you first met in 1983 in Ronnie Mathews' group? We're talking a good 10 years here.*

SMITTY SMITH: Countless.

RAY DRUMMOND: Countless.

SS: And the first recording we actually did together was Branford Marsalis' *Scenes In The City*. Those sessions were April and October '83.

MS: *Branford Marsalis is an example of a modern musician who plays a good number of originals versus standards. Does that make it more difficult for a sideman?*

SS: It makes it more interesting for me. I like playing original music. I like playing people's personal musical situation. It's nice to see that people have . . . some kind of personal identity that is strong enough to stand up to time. It gives me the challenge of being able to put my personality into the music and make it an integral part of that particular music.

RD: It's easier, in a sense, to enhance that music when it's original. The challenge for me in standard material is that since most people have played it again and again and again, you have to find something new and different to play in that stuff.

SS: About two months ago, Ray had his gig at the Vanguard. It was me, Renee Rosnes, Craig Handy, Steve Nelson, and Senegalese percussionist Mor Thiam. We did the music from Ray's new record, basically. [For the actual recording session], it was Joe Lovano and Craig, Mor Thiam, and Danilo Perez on piano. We didn't all have a rehearsal together. The horns just kind of ran down some stuff, and the piano, and me, Ray and Mor Thiam ran down some stuff. But when we got in the studio, it was like magic. The music just grew, right there in front of us. Everybody's keying into each other, and *voom*, we're off. When we got to the Vanguard and just played . . . it took off.

RD: And we had other people in there [who weren't on the record]. But they've worked with us, so they're open and sensitive to putting their own personalities into this music. One of my gripes is that very few people subscribe to what I call "The Miles Davis Theory of Bandleading," which is that you hire people to do what they do, and then you turn them loose. That's what they're there for.

SS: It's a mutual trust. You trust the bandleader, that he has a strong enough direction to know what he wants and knows where to take it. At the same time, he has trust in you to be able to add something to it, to maybe take it some place he wasn't even thinking about. The whole becomes larger than the sum of its parts. Miles had a very strong knack for that.

MS: *What are the mistakes you've seen other people make that you're trying to avoid as*

"Ultimately, we're storytellers. In the great tradition that comes straight out of Africa. We're telling a story through music. It's not about the audience going 'Yaaay!'"

—Ray Drummond

leaders?

RD: Two things. They both have to do with personnel in the band. Make sure that everyone gets a chance to play the music. Or, perhaps more properly spoken, everybody has a chance to let themselves be taken by the music. That's what I think a band is all about. It doesn't matter whether the band has been playing together for two hours or two years or two millenia. That's the real serious part of bandleading: to be able to nurture it and yet walk away from it so that everybody else can do whatever it is that they do. Miles' great groups of the '50s and '60s are an example of this. The second thing is one of fairness. Why did you hire someone in the first place? What is the vote that you're giving a band member by being in the band with you? You make sure that people get a chance to express their personalities. I've been in a lot of bands where the bandleader gets nervous. They . . . supposedly want to draw out the personalities of the people involved. Then you get to the gig or the record date and all of a sudden they become unglued.

MS: *Afraid of change?*

RD: I would say they're afraid to leap off the precipice. To me, jazz is about leaping off the precipice. That's part of the lifestyle. We study this music so hard and we live a life in which we can adapt to whatever kind of music, whatever kind of mood, whatever kind of feeling, whatever kind of rhythm is asked of us. The idea is that every time you do that, you're ready to jump off the cliff.

MS: *What's the difference between working as a leader and working as a sideman?*

SS: You have to be a lot more responsible [Drummond laughs]. One thing I learned about being a bandleader, is that you learn to appreciate bandleaders more. I strive to become a better bandleader by having more respect for it. I encourage guys. I let them play. Try to let the rest of the band become an integral part of the music that's happening, because I know that's the way I want to



feel when I'm in a musical situation. Also, encourage the guys to kick in their ideas in the form of compositions.

As a leader, I was able to express through composition what I was hearing. That made me feel good. It's a process of gaining confidence. On *Keeper Of The Drums*, my first record, I tried to put out there that I'm more than just a drummer. I'm a musician. I'm thinking musically. The focus was on the music, not on the drums.

RD: If they let us become bandleaders like we really want to, we would be in the position to give a lot of the younger guys a forum for a lot of their ideas in the context of our bands. That was the way it used to be. People were encouraged to join bands specifically so they could write.

SS: A lot of musicians got their personal style by being in this type of incubator.

RD: Art Blakey's was probably the last band where that kind of creative process continued on.

SS: We just need working units out here again. Economics has a lot to do with it, but also the record industry [Drummond whistles]. They just really accept garbage. They just put out stuff that is so green, there's not enough to it. It doesn't matter how well a guy plays; it's, "Are you young enough, because we have this image to sell."

RD: One of the responsibilities of a recording executive is to make sure that you document some of the best music that's out

here now. That way, you ensure not only the continuance of the highest standard of the music; you also, in a sense, provide a clue of education for those who are not so knowledgeable.

MS: *Electronics are now very much a part of today's music scene. Does that affect you? Do you own a Fender, Ray?*

RD: I have a Fender Precision, post-CBS.

SS: I've never seen him with it.

RD: The last time I played that Fender bass was [a country-club gig] in 1979. If people call up and want an electric bass, I say "Look, here are the guys to call up for electric bass." I'm a bass man all the way. It's a different instrument, though its similarly played in terms of where the notes are. The two instruments now have a totally different tradition that has been established for each one. It's my contention that you can't play both well. But I have absolutely nothing against the electric bass.

MS: *It's just an instrument you don't happen to play right now.*

RD: No, it's not "right now." I'll never be playing the electric bass. You won't see that.

SS: Oh man, I just got this date, Ray. I want you to thumb slap and everything.

RD: Here's some numbers. You just call 'em up and tell 'em the Bulldog sent you.

SS: I'm starting to get into electronics with the drums. I'm intrigued by what I feel I can do with it, and not what's already been done. The electronic drum pads and the triggers, the stuff I've heard recorded on these things is very limited. It's a matter of economics. I don't know too many jazz drummers that can afford that equipment. Some of that stuff runs into the tens of thousands of dollars if you want to get a good rig set up. The other thing is time; to really spend reading the manuals to learn the parameters of what this machine really can do.

RD: Remember, he's talking about playing *music* now.

SS: Not just turning it on and using the pre-programmed sounds . . . sounding like Saturday at Sam Ash or Manny's.

RD: Ha ha!!!!.

SS: I feel I can really do something with it musically. Integrate it with the acoustic drums, but make some music with it.

RD: That's a different question as a bass player than what you asked me. That's a frontier that's undeveloped at the moment, using acoustic bass and trying to go through the amp through the electronic process. You could use the same equipment he's talking about, except maybe the drum pads, and you can go through a whole series of textures that could be used with acoustic bass. I would love to get into that, but that takes a lot more time than I have. But Smitty wants to play music with it. This is a musician first, and he chose to play the drums. He plays *music* on these drums. We continue to

"It's a mutual trust. You trust the bandleader, that he has a strong enough direction to know what he wants and knows where to take it. At the same time, he has trust in you to be able to add something to it, to maybe take it some place he wasn't even thinking about. The whole becomes larger than the sum of its parts. Miles [Davis] had a very strong knack for that."

— "Smitty" Smith

communicate. Without warning, when we're playing, I'll do something, and he'll pick right up on it. We both kick each other. I think we're both harder on ourselves than any critic ever can be. Ultimately, we're storytellers. In the great tradition that comes straight out of Africa. We're telling a story



through music. It's not about the audience going 'Yaaaay!'

SS: Clapping over pyrotechnics.

RD: You get off the bandstand, and somebody comes over to you, and you almost see them start to cry. That's enough right there. I'm Silly Putty in their hands. **DB**

EQUIPMENT

Smitty Smith endorses Pearl drums, Zildjian cymbals, and Vater Percussion drumsticks (he uses their Manhattan 7A Nylon Tip model). His Pearl drums include 8 x 12- and 9 x 13-inch rack-toms, 14 x 14 and 16 x 16 floor-toms, and 14 x 18- and 14 x 20-inch bass drums. His snare is a 6½ x 14 with a free-floating brass shell. His heads are Remo Ambassadors.

The "Smitty Smith" sound comes from riveted cymbals—22-inch Zildjian Ks. He uses a 20-inch K as a second ride, and 15-, 16-, and 17-inch crashes.

"I'm starting to practice with a new kit I got from

Pearl—it's a double-bass drum kit. I haven't performed on that kit yet. You've got to find a club or venue that can handle that much equipment. It takes some space to set that up."

Like most serious bass players, Ray Drummond's basic instrument qualifies as an antique. He uses a French flatback bass "built around 1870 at the school of Jean Baptiste Vuillaume." His strings are Thomastik Dominant. For a pickup, Drummond uses a Barcus-Berry model 3150 transducer. His amplifier is a Walter Woods MI-100-8, his speaker a Bose 802 Series II.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

The easiest way to find a recording featuring either Marvin "Smitty" Smith or Ray "Bulldog" Drummond is to go blindfolded into your local record store and stick your hand in a bin. They

Marvin "Smitty" Smith

KEEPER OF THE DRUMS—Concord Jazz 325
THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED—Concord Jazz 379

Ray "Bulldog" Drummond

EXCURSION—Arabesque 106
SUSANITA—Nilva 3410
MAYA'S DANCE—Nilva 3415
CAMERA IN A BAG—Criss Cross 1040
THE ESSENCE—DMP 480
TWO OF A KIND—Evidence 22017 (w/John Hicks)
ONE TO ONE—DMP 473 (Bill Mays)

work on so many different albums it would be impossible to list them all. For a more detailed Marvin "Smitty" Smith selected discography, see **DB** May '88.

ONE TO ONE II—DMP 482 (Mays)

Drummond/Smith

BACK TO THE CITY—Contemporary 14020 (Art Farmer/Benny Golson Jazztet)
REAL TIME—Contemporary 14034 (Farmer/Golson)
RED ZONE—Reservoir 103 (Peter Leitch)
PORTRAITS AND DEDICATIONS—Criss Cross 1039 (Leitch)
MEAN WHAT YOU SAY—Concord Jazz 4417 (Leitch)
THE NEXT GENERATION—Columbia 47405 (Mingus Dynasty)

Jazz Fiction

LYLE MAYS

By Martin Johnson

Sitting in the lounge of New York's Hit Factory, Lyle Mays should be flush with triumph. The previous day, he finished remastering *Fictionary*, his first recording as a leader in five years, not to mention his first fully acoustic effort. And on this gray December afternoon, Mays, Pat Metheny, and Steve Rodby work on remastering an upcoming live record by the Pat Metheny Group. Everyone seemed thrilled with the progress.

But if he's psyched, it doesn't show. He reclines contemplatively on the sofa looking more unperturbed than ecstatic. After talking with the 39-year-old keyboardist for over an hour, his even keel makes sense. For instance, he doesn't resent his reputation as a fusion keyboardist: "What could I expect?" he asked rhetorically. "Those are the records I've made; those are the tours I've done. Anyway, resent is an emotion I have trouble with; it doesn't accomplish anything. I've pursued what I've pursued."

In many respects, Mays is the thinking man's thinking man. He carefully considers each question, probing many angles. At one point, lost in my notes, I asked a question that he had already answered. Mays elaborated his previous response, pushing deeper into the meaning of the question, avoiding any repetition. Although he doesn't wear his intellect on his sleeve, he not only speaks in complete sentences but in often elegantly formed paragraphs.

Until recently, Mays rarely stepped out of his role as keyboardist, composer, and primary sidekick in Metheny's group. The two met as students at the Wichita Jazz Festival in 1975 and have remained bandmates since the inception of the guitarist's band in 1977. Although *Fictionary* features stellar work from bassist Marc Johnson and drummer Jack DeJohnette, its biggest input came from Metheny, the recording's producer.

"We had just finished a tour, when Pat approached me, and said, 'You should go into the studio. I really think your playing is the best I've heard you play.' I was like . . . thanks [*shrugs*]. I was almost resistant to the idea, though. I hadn't prepared a record.

"On the first two records I did [*Lyle Mays and Street Dreams*], I spent a lot of time in preproduction orchestrating things. It



wasn't even on my mind to do an acoustic record. I have to give Pat credit; he kind of talked me into doing it.

"He also said, 'I think it should be a trio record.' It was a good role for a producer. I was like an actor taking direction, and I kind of enjoyed that role. So I went home and collected some compositions that hadn't found homes either in the Metheny Group or on my own records, and discovered there were quite a few pieces that deserved to be recorded."

In addition to his rediscoveries, Mays chose Steve Swallow's "Falling Grace," and on the night before the session, he penned "Heartaches" to round out the repertoire. He relished the pressure of having to write on deadline rather than waiting for inspiration. He said the key element for each piece was "their suitability as vehicles for improvisation."

"I think Stravinsky said, 'Art dies of freedom, and thrives on constraint,' and I like the constraints of a cycle of chord changes. It's limiting enough so that everyone can agree that we're going from point A

to point B, but free enough to allow an infinite number of ways to get there. I think I was looking for pieces with the right amount of constraint."

When he found them, the trio went right into the studio and got to work. They recorded the album in one night. "It's very respectful to the 'live-to-two' tradition, except we did live-to-multitrack so we could mix it. We didn't polish the music so much as we illuminated it. Our number-one objective was to have every note that everyone played audible. The other thing was to make the music sound intimate."

The record doesn't mark a "swing back to tradition" for Mays. "The music itself is not bebop," he explained. "It's informed by those traditions, but there's no label that works for me—modern acoustic music? Labels are hard for me; I think most musicians don't see music that way. I certainly don't. I think we look at a piece of music and ask, 'What can we bring to it that will give it integrity and add life?'"

Fictionary is opened and closed by two

free pieces. The first piece began simply as the soundcheck, but the three liked it so much they opted to keep it. They chose to try it again in order to lend a sense of symmetry to the project. However, Mays isn't seeking a gig at the next FMP festival. "I think most jazz musicians play free whether it's documented or not," he said. "If you can play with chord changes, you can play without them. Players at the level of a Jack DeJohnette or a Marc Johnson don't really play free—it's like they invent their own constraints. Jack is one of the most compositionally inventive drummers; what he plays relates to what he had played or what the other players were doing.

"The free playing was pretty successful because all three of us were thinking that we had to put on our own constraints. We didn't discuss the kind of piece we were going to play, so we had to invent the style, the mood, and the form."

Mays' first free gig was last summer at Carnegie Hall with Bobby McFerrin. It almost blew his mind. "It was such a counter to my Midwestern sensibilities. I was brought up to believe that you practiced and practiced for years and years, and then, if you were good enough, you got to go to Carnegie Hall and play what you've practiced. It was a shock to go up onstage and not know the first thing about what you're going to do," he said, keeling sideways lightly with laughter.

About two years ago, after living in Boston for 15 years, Mays made the big move and got back to his Wisconsin roots; he set up shop way out in the country, 20 miles outside of Madison. Instead of a decrease in his workload because he's out of the loop, his new location has increased it because he has to create his own projects.

"I was guilty of assuming that since I was on the East Coast that I would naturally be doing a lot of different things, but ultimately I wasn't actively involving myself in it. I've done more varied things in the last year and a half . . . it makes me think I should have moved a long time ago."

Among the new things Mays has pursued is the writing of a chamber piece. He has taken a quartet on the road to South America and Europe. And he's done sideman dates with reedman Paul McCandless. On those gigs, Fred Simon played synths and Mays focused on the piano, which may have sparked his renewed interest in the instrument.

"It sounds silly to say it like this, but it just felt right," said Mays. "It's been difficult [to focus on the piano] in the context of the Pat Metheny Group tours because there are so many other roles I had to fill. Sometimes, I would have to split up the hands—one hand on synths, and one on piano—and that's not really playing the piano."

Although Mays is single and childless, he has embarked on a sideline scoring readings of children's stories. He did the music to Meryl Streep's reading of "The Tale Of Peter Rabbit" and "The Tale Of Mr. Jeremy Fisher," and he scored a reading by Max Von Sydow of Eric Metaxas' *East Of The Sun, West Of The Moon*. His involvement came when the Rabbit Ears production company made him an enticing offer on both projects.

"In a way, I'm mining past jazz traditions. . . . There is no clear way. There is no single jazz style—maybe there never has been; but it's less clear now than ever."



"They gave me an unheard of amount of musical freedom. They said, 'Here's the story as it was read. Now you decide the pacing. Shorten it up, or stretch it out. You're not writing music to a picture; we'll do the picture to your music.'"

It was a stark contrast to his previous experiences scoring films such as *The Falcon And The Snowman* (co-composed with Metheny). "In almost every other kind of scoring situation, the picture has been done. The composer has to come in, and in 13-point-four seconds, get a musical thought out. If you want 14-point-four, tough luck. They'll cut it down to 13-point-four and leave off the resolution."

East Of The Sun marked another new direction for Mays. There was no jazz in the

score. Instead, Mays drew on his classical influences, and created a more traditional score.

Although he never aspired to play classical music ("I felt that's like being a trained soldier doing what you're told"), it remains a vital part of his musical life. At home, he listens to such composers as Bartok, Stravinsky, Brahms, Ravel, and Debussy. He still listens to much of the jazz that influenced him as a teenager: Miles Davis' *Filles De Kiliminjaro* and *In A Silent Way*; the first Weather Report record, Herbie Hancock's pre-*Headhunters* work, and the Chick Corea-Airto Moriera sessions. "Very little since then has affected me," he said.

"In a way, I'm mining past jazz traditions; but it's a function of living in a postmodern world. There is no clear way. There is no single jazz style—maybe there never has been; but it's less clear now than ever. So I feel comfortable exploring my choices."

For Mays, his choices have largely centered around creating a music that draws on both the jazz and Brazilian musical esthetic. "A lot of what we've explored in the Pat Metheny Group has to do with putting the jazz tradition in a Brazilian rhythmic context."

When asked if he feels overshadowed by Metheny, Mays breaks into a half-grin. "Pat is a star. He walks out onstage and people go wild. Everyone else who walks out on a stage with him gets overshadowed. Personally, I've never been that interested in the public aspect of music. I feel like I have more in common with academia than the entertainment world. My joys come from exploring music and increasing my knowledge of it.

"It's funny, but jazz can now sustain that kind of lifestyle. It's a high art, but it's got a commercial realm. I reluctantly participate in that realm. I don't aspire to reach people who aren't listening on a deep level. It's kind of a career suicide to say it, but I'm not that interested in how I'm perceived in the marketplace." **DB**

EQUIPMENT

Lyle Mays plays Steinway pianos. "They're still the best." However, he's less particular about synthesizers: "I've been as inclusive as I can be. Basically, I still feel that they're immature instruments. They are nowhere near the level of the sax or acoustic piano. "I try to get good musical uses, but there's no one

synth that can do that. I try to use a lot of different ones in the hope that a lot of the little weaknesses and idiosyncracies will get lost in the composite. I will use anything. Kurzweil, Korg, Roland. I'm always adding new ones. I still have the old Oberheims."

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

FICTIONARY—Geffen (tba)
STREET DREAMS—Geffen 24204
LYLE MAYS—Geffen 24097

for children

EAST OF THE SUN, WEST OF THE MOON—Rabbit Ears R2 70419
THE TALE OF PETER RABBIT—Windham Hill 0708

with Paul McCandless

PREMONITION—Windham Hill 10140

with Pat Metheny

SECRET STORY—Geffen 24468

LETTER FROM HOME—Geffen 24245
STILL LIFE (TALKING)—Geffen 24125
THE FALCON AND THE SNOWMAN—EMI-America 17150
FIRST CIRCLE—ECM 823 342
TRAVELS—ECM 2 810 622
OFFRAMP—ECM 817 138
AS FALLS WICHITA, SO FALLS WICHITA FALLS—ECM 821 416
AMERICAN GARAGE—ECM 827 134
PAT METHENY GROUP—ECM 825 593
WATERCOLORS—ECM 827 409

Boogie Woogie Patriarch

PINETOP PERKINS

By John Corbett

When he was nine years old, Joe Willie Perkins rigged a one-stringed instrument between a standing wall and the side of his house in Belzona, Mississippi. With a bottle for a slide, he played the standard Delta blues tune known as "Rollin' And Tumblin'," a musical figure that Hambone Willie Newbern would lay on shellac seven years later, in 1929. Versions followed by Little Brother Montgomery, Robert Johnson, Sleepy John Estes, and Baby Face Leroy, before Muddy Waters committed the tune to vinyl on two occasions in 1950. That was just 19 years before Joe Willie—by then known as "Pinetop"—joined Muddy's band.

Pinetop is one of those capsule embodiments of music history; his career spans virtually the entire expanse of recorded blues. And yet, one listen to his latest release, *On Top* (Deluge 3002), lets you know that he's a hefty trek from the preservation society. His firm, rambunctious, but also rather sophisticated style sounds as fresh now as it did when he started recording.

"Started out on guitar," says the 78-year-old Perkins, referring to advances made on less ad-hoc instruments. "I started working with a piano-man, tunin' pianos. Learned one key from the other and then taught myself to play, listening to records. I started playing piano about 1930, doublin' on guitar. If I hear somebody play something once or twice, I can get it. I have a good ear; I can hear changes comin' before they get to me."

What he didn't hear coming was an angry woman with a knife, who, in the mid-'40s, chose his main axe for him by severing muscles in his left arm. "I couldn't chord like I used to, so I stuck to the piano," he recounts, undramatically. "Before I got this muscle cut," he kneads his upper arm and fondly recalls his left hand of yore, "I had bass rollin' like thunder, man! Now I have to play straight bass, more like bass guitar." At the time of the injury, Perkins had been working for several years with Sonny Boy



ROBERT BARDAY

Williamson on KFFA's *King Biscuit Time* radio program, broadcasting from Helena, Ark.

In the mid-'50s, Perkins decided to move north to Chicago, like Williamson had, but he first stopped in Houston to make a couple of recordings for Sun Records with guitar great Earl Hooker. These included a remake of Clarence "Pine Top" Smith's original "Pine Top's Boogie Woogie," the very song that introduced the term "boogie woogie" into the blues-and-jazz lexicon back in 1929. "I didn't play it just like Smith," says Perkins. "I loved it when he played it, and I *couldn't* play just like it, but I wound up with a style of

my own."

When he finally settled in the Windy City in 1954, Perkins had indeed developed his own chugging, boogie-infused style, replete with a darker side and jazz shadings. This made him hot property, even in a city full of monster pianists the likes of Lafayette Leake, Sunnyland Slim, Big Moose Walker, and Otis Spann. In fact, Spann was to play a decisive part in the next chapter of Perkins' musical story, which was interrupted by a hiatus, during which he worked as a mechanic. At the end of the 1960s, Perkins went back into the studios and recorded a batch of sensational sides with Hooker, recently reissued on Arhoolie as *Two Bugs And A Roach* (324). "That boy could play some guitar. Whooo! He played off and on with me from when he was about 14 years old 'til he was about 40."

In 1969, Muddy Waters came to see Perkins and Hooker, telling the pianist: "Anytime you want another job, I got one for ya." Otis Spann had left Muddy, opting to start a new group with his wife, Lucille, and Hooker grew increasingly sick ("two bugs" = tuberculosis). So, Pinetop took up Waters' offer. After surviving a terrible car accident that put Waters in the hospital for several months, Perkins spent the next 11 years playing piano (and organ, and even harpsichord) around the world as a member of the Muddy Waters Blues Band, recording for Chess and then Columbia's subsidiary, Blue Sky, a compilation of which has just been released as *Blues Sky* (Epic/Legacy 46172). In 1976, while on tour with Waters, Pinetop and guitarist Luther Johnson Jr. each cut sessions for the French Black and Blue label, *Boogie Woogie King* and *Luther's Blues* (reissued as Evidence 26011 and 26010).

In the early '80s, the Waters band seceded and became the Legendary Blues Band, and Perkins played on a couple of records with them. After a few years of low profile, he once again emerged in 1988, with a Blind Pig record called *After Hours* (3088). The '90s have already been extremely productive for Pinetop, with *On Top*, *Pinetop's Boogie Woogie* (Antone's 0020), a live record with the Fabulous Thunderbirds recorded at Antone's, a CD with Viniu Dora (an Icelandic blues band), not to mention session work, like his crankin' contribution to Zora Young's *Travelin' Light* (Deluge 3003).

"I tried to play jazz, but my fingers were too slow," Pinetop admits. "I love Count Basie, Erskine Hawkins, Joe Liggins. But I was in a rut—got in some blues and couldn't get out of it." Then he raises his eyebrows and says: "But the way I play, I play like horn style." He sings "Salt Peanuts" and jabs at an air-piano. "See, I don't make turnarounds like nobody else. Other people, like Sunnyland, got them old-time turnarounds. But I really make it turn around!" **DB**

Key

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



Abbey Lincoln

DEVIL'S GOT YOUR TONGUE—Verve 513 574: RAINBOW; EVALINA COFFEY (THE LEGEND OF); STORY OF MY FATHER; A CHILD IS BORN; PEOPLE IN ME; A CIRCLE OF LOVE; JUNGLE QUEEN; THE MERRY DANCER; DEVIL'S GOT YOUR TONGUE; SPRING WILL BE A LITTLE LATE THIS YEAR; THE MUSIC IS THE MAGIC. (70:02)

Personnel: Lincoln, vocals; J.J. Johnson, trombone (2,4,10); Stanley Turrentine, tenor sax (5,8,10,11); Maxine Roach, viola (2,6); Rodney Kendrick, piano; Marcus McLaurine, bass; Grady Tate, Yoron Israel (1,5,6,8,9), drums; Babatunde Olatunji (7), Kehinde O'Uhuru (7), Sule O'Uhuru (7), Gordy Ryan (7), percussion; the Staple Singers (3,11), the Noel Singers (1,5,6), backing vocals.

★★★★½

ABBEY SINGS BILLIE VOL. 2—enja CD 7037: GIMME A PIGFOOT; NO MORE; GOD BLESS THE CHILD; DON'T EXPLAIN; FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE; PLEASE DON'T TALK ABOUT ME (WHEN I'M GONE); FOR ALL WE KNOW. (40:21)

Personnel: Lincoln, vocals; Harold Vick, tenor sax; James Widman, piano; Tarik Shah, bass; Mark Johnson, drums.

★★★★

Abbey Lincoln's voice is full of such grace, pride, and self-assurance, plump with the residue of age and experience but lithe and young at its core. It has the same overripeness as late-Billie, say circa *Lady In Satin*, a quavery vibrato, and meticulous diction wound 'round with pliant phrasing. Where *Lady Day* always sang with that bittersweet, gut-wrenching lilt, Lincoln's gloomiest songs are still shot through with a smile.

With her third Verve release, Lincoln has hit an incredible stride. On this outing she hooks up with old friends and new in a mélange of musical contexts, all of which have the same warmth, elegance, and impeccable sound as *You Gotta Pay The Band* and *The World Is*

Falling Down. She belts frisson-filled gospel-jazz with the Staples on "Story Of My Father" and "The Music Is The Magic." On "Jungle Queen," Lincoln lords over an Afro-percussion session with Olatunji; compare it with "All Africa" (from Max Roach/Oscar Brown, Jr.'s *We Insist! Freedom Now Suite*), a similar setting with a very different feel from 1960. The children's choir pieces verge on the sappy; some might say they're hip-deep in sap, but I'm a sucker for the curly-Qs that Abbey lays over their flat backdrop. Lincoln is also a first-class writer, and *Devil's Got Your Tongue* is well-stocked with her beautiful, socially stirring songs.

She's a marvy interpreter, too. The Holiday disc is recorded live, recorded in New York in 1987, featuring a strong rhythm section and tenorman Harold Vick. In fact, the two concerts took place just a few days before the saxophonist died. Like Turrentine, who plays sensitive tenor on *Devil*, Vick was a seasoned, supportive accompanist, and his *Steppin' Out* ('60s Blue Note) is a rare prize. No better place to observe the differences and likenesses of Billie and Abbey than on Lincoln's less-eerie "Don't Explain," or her lovely version of "For All We Know." It's the best kind of tribute: she takes the material and respectfully makes it her own.

—John Corbett



Joe Henderson

SO NEAR, SO FAR (MUSINGS FOR MILES)—Verve 314 517 674: MILES AHEAD; JOSHUA; PERANCING (NO BLUES); FLAMENCO SKETCHES; MILESTONES; TEO; SWING SPRING; CIRCLE; SIDE CAR; SO NEAR, SO FAR. (72:56)

Personnel: Henderson, tenor saxophone; John Scofield, guitar; Dave Holland, bass; Al Foster, drums.

★★★★★

Too often, discussions of Miles Davis' greatness as a bandleader center on his choices of personnel and his catalytic gifts in the studio and in concert. Discs like *So Near, So Far (Musings For Miles)* will shift the focus onto his richly varied compositions. Spanning the years between his '47 debut as a leader for Savoy and the quintet-plus-George Benson sides in '68, these 10 tunes only scratch the surface of Miles' output. Still, just as Ellington, Monk, and Mingus' compositions were the cornerstones of their bandleading methodologies, *So Near, So Far* cogently argues this to be the case with Davis, too.

Joe Henderson, a Miles alum by virtue of four weekend gigs in '67, is masterful throughout this well-sequenced program, toasting sub-

lime lyricism on "Miles Ahead," invoking Iberian mysteries on "Flamenco Sketches," and summoning fire on "Side Car." Yet, he's not the dominant voice in this quartet. John Scofield, Dave Holland, and Al Foster make defining contributions on each track. Collectively, they strike the golden Milesian balance that the music is best served by each musician's most personal statements.

This is an excellent Miles album.

—Bill Shoemaker



Lighthouse All-Stars

EIGHT BROTHERS—Candid 79521: BACK TO THE BASIE-ICS; YESTERDAY, TODAY AND FOREVER; UNFINISHED DREAM; MAGIC MAN; EIGHT BROTHERS; STRAY HORNS; LIKE IT IS; BATTLE HYMN OF THE REPUBLIC; THE ESSENCE OF TENDERNESS; DOUBLE TROUBLE; NO ADDITIVES, NO PRESERVATIVES. (69:13)

Personnel: Shorty Rogers, trumpet, flugelhorn; Bud Shank, alto saxophone; Conte Candoli, trumpet; Bill Perkins, baritone, tenor, soprano saxophones; Bob Cooper, tenor saxophone; Pete Jolly, piano; Monty Budwig, bass; Larance Marable, drums.

★★★★½

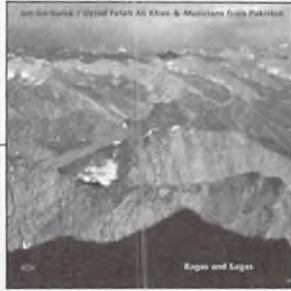
The brethren in question here are still-vital veterans of the West Coast Cool sound of '30 years. The Lighthouse in question was the famed beachside nightclub that became known as a Los Angeles jazz mecca, and where this brand of mainstream jazz flourished.

Time and the river go on; shortly after this date, the redoubtable L.A.-based bassist Monty Budwig died of cancer. Dedicated to his memory, *Eight Brothers* is a clean and polished affair—accenting the five-man horn frontline—that gives the mainstream tradition a good name. Marable, the seasoned L.A. drummer who has recently enjoyed renewed attention as part of Charlie Haden's Quartet West, keeps a light, unpretentious rhythmic clock ticking, with Budwig and Jolly's help.

Rogers writes most of the material and leads his horn pack through charts that make up in bright-toned intelligence what they lack in innovation. The skittering melody of the title track flings tightly navigated 16th-note flurries over an exotic, sinking rhythm section. With "Like It Is," Rogers revisits Bud Powell's "Un Poco Loco" and lends his own surging new variation. "Battle Hymn Of The Republic," arranged by Rogers, wobbles precariously between patriotism and Disneyland-ish kitsch; but otherwise, the music is unpretentiously pleasurable.

As we know by now, jazz history has looped around, and the controlled heat of this music sounds once again like the pulse of the times. Somehow, the Lighthouse All-Stars take you back while bringing you up to date.

—Josef Woodard



**Jan Garbarek/
Ustad Fateh Ali
Khan**

RAGAS AND SAGAS—ECM 1442 511 263-2: RAGA I; SAGA; RAGA II; RAGA III; RAGA IV. (52:15 minutes)

Personnel: Garbarek, soprano, tenor saxophones; Ali Khan, Deepika Thathaal, voices; Ustad Shaukat Hussain, tabla; Ustad Nazim Ali Khan, sarangi; Manu Katche, drums (2).

★ ★ ★ ★

**Rabih Abou-
Khalil**

BLUE CAMEL—Mesa R2 79048: SAHARA; TSARKA; ZIRIAB; BLUE CAMEL; ON TIME; A NIGHT IN THE MOUNTAINS; RABOU-ABOU-KABOU; BEIRUT. (61:26)

Personnel: Abou-Khalil, oud; Charlie Mariano, alto saxophone; Kenny Wheeler, flugelhorn, trumpet; Steve Swallow, electric bass; Milton Cardona, congas; Nabil Khaiat, frame drums; Ramesh Shotham, South Indian drums, percussion.

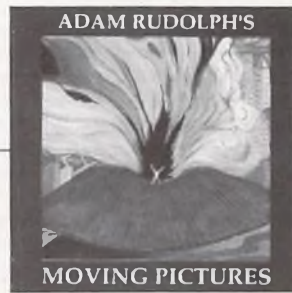
★ ★ ★ ★

Musical meetings between East and West usually entail one of two challenges. One is demonstrating the adaptability of ethnic instruments and materials to Western idioms, particularly jazz, as Rabih Abou-Khalil does with the lute-like oud and classical Arabic music on *Blue Camel*. Jan Garbarek embodies the other on *Ragas And Sagas*, as has Charlie Mariano over the years—the submersion of the jazz-schooled improviser in Eastern music as a test of his skills and sensibilities. Both discs succeed in their respective endeavors.

With the exception of Garbarek's "Saga," where synthesizer textures and Manu Katche's African rhythms create vivid cross-cultural contrasts, *Ragas And Sagas* finds the saxophonist more or less sitting in with Ustad Fateh Ali Khan and his Pakistani cohorts. Garbarek's churning tenor phrasings find a propulsive counterpart in Ustad Shaukat Hussain's tabla, while his limpid soprano lyricism melds with the otherworldly voices of Ali Khan and Deepika Thathaal. But, it's Garbarek's sensitivity to the nuances and power of North Indian classical music that makes his contributions so cogent.

Mariano's sweet hollering is just one measure of Abou-Khalil's effective outreach on *Blue Camel*. The simmering cross-rhythms of Milton Cardona, Ramesh Shotham, and Nabil Khaiat are another, as are Steve Swallow's nimble bass lines and Kenny Wheeler's burnished trumpet and flugelhorn musings. They ably flesh out Abou-Khalil's spindly, slippery cadenced themes and support his often dizzying solos. The empathetic interplay, however, doesn't dilute the strong Arab identity in Abou-Khalil's work. Once swayed by *Blue Camel*, check out Tunisian oud player Anouar Brahem's *Conte De L'incroyable Amour* (ECM), an equally intriguing program of contemporary pan-Islamic music.

—Bill Shoemaker



Adam Rudolph

MOVING PICTURES—Flying Fish FF70612: SOGOSO; 1ST INTERLUDE; WALKING THE CURVE; UNSEEN RAIN; 2ND INTERLUDE; ALCHEMY; ULTRAMARINE; THE OPEN DOOR; OSHOGBO; WHAT I FELL PAST; AFRICA 21; 3RD INTERLUDE; PRAYER; 4TH INTERLUDE; RADIANT VISION; 5TH INTERLUDE; SOLO; AFTERWARD. (62:45)

Personnel: Rudolph, percussion, vocals; Shankar, violin, vocals; Wah Wah Watson, G.E. Stinson, guitars; Susan Allen, harp, kayagum; Jihad Racy, ney, oud, mizmar, kanun, mizwiz; Ralph Jones, reeds; Charles Moore, trumpet, shofar; Caroline Shankar, vocals, tanpura; James Macubya, nanga, adung, vocals; Jose Luis Perez, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

In the CD booklet, Rudolph writes of universal principles underlying musical language, principles that he sees as primarily rhythmic. Personally, I don't believe in such universals, and I think the best parts of *Moving Pictures* support my unprincipled position.

Historical port of call here is Brian Eno/Jon Hassell's "fourth world" scenario from the beginning of the '80s: Rudolph opts for some of the same gulping percussives, echoey winds, and dense, static sound forms while using a less synthetic, more acoustic overall ambience. Often, he'll arrange a piece around a percussion loop (sampled or live), onto which sonic textures are projected and melodic modes are sketched.

Like primo Prime Time and Decoding Society, Rudolph knows how to play the specific gravity of different instruments, musicians, and musical languages off of one another. What differentiates this from the blend-mad blandness of so much syncretism is the way it capitalizes on the *tension* inherent in cultural contact-sports. Check the cool counterrhythm of the guitar in the third panel of "Alchemy," the

clash of flute and pterodactyl-no ses on "What I Fell Past," and the placid melody superimposed over the abyssal string sample on "Radiant Vision." *Moving Pictures* doesn't celebrate "one world," but many.

—John Corbett



Bruce Katz

CRESCENT CRAWL—Audioquest 1012: CRESCENT CRAWL; JUST AN EXPRESSION; CONTRITION; BK'S BROILER; BUZZ CUT; ONE WAY TICKET; BOOMER'S THING; BEAST; WILL IT GO ROUND IN CIRCLES; JUST A CLOSER WALK WITH THEE. (50:31 minutes)

Personnel: Katz, piano, organ (3,4,7,9); Marty Ballou, bass; Lorne Entress, drums; Bob Malach, tenor saxophone; Kevin Barry, guitar.

★ ★ ★ 1/2

Those unfamiliar with Boston's Bruce Katz should know straight off that he's not some ham-fisted blues roustabout, even if in years past he did savage his keyboard in beer-soaked clubs alongside wild-man Barrence Whitfield. Rather, the Ronnie Earl sideman brings thinking power and a congenial sense of refinement to his playing, drawing on his studies in jazz at Berklee and in composition at the New England Conservatory without impinging on his passion for real blues.

Katz's music for piano and band resists being relegated to handy categories such as "jazz" or "blues." A sophisticated improviser and a composer having an untraditional harmonic conception, he demands listeners attend closely to his probings as well as get their feet moving to his kinetic grooves. Katz and drummer Lorne Entress have an intriguing rapport going, as the pianist's challenging lines and dense clumps of notes contrast with his Connecticut friend's simple, rock-ribbed strokes to create tension. On "Beast," Katz's ambiguous piano and New Yorker Bob Malach's inquisitive tenor confront Entress' relentlessly steady smashing of the snare, giving the composition an unsettling mood that hints of both a Chicago blues impudence and an AACM boldness. Malach and Katz bridle their innovative jazz leanings while jumping the blues on "Buzz Cut," and the group fills the title track with delightful funk whimsies that pay unaffected tribute to Fess Longhair and James Booker.

Katz's Hammond B-3 does not carry the daring spirit of his piano. Three songs, including Billy Preston's 1973 gumdrop, "Round In Circles," are enjoyable, but familiar, and they're short on emotional believability. Only a fourth, "Contrition," registers, showing the players have delicate feelings for the nuances of bitterness.

—Frank John Hudley

Savory, Savvy, Savoy (Part 1)

by John Corbett

Savoy Records, best known: (a) as the Newark, New Jersey-based label with important, early investment in the emergent bebop; (b) for its diverse catalog, ranging from George Shearing, Red Rodney, and the MJQ to Sun Ra, Perry Robinson, and Archie Shepp, (c) for its frequent use of moronic, B-movie graphics. The correct answer is (d) all of the above. Of course Savoy has no monopoly on the kitsch cover; think of early Cecil Taylor records sporting pleated skirts and sports cars. But for sheer force of stupid, nothing quite touches **Art Pepper's *Surf Ride*** (Savoy 0115; 37:14: ★★★★★), a fine release consisting of three different sessions (and groups) from the early '50s, now available in all its glory as part of a grand Savoy reissue campaign by the Japanese Denon label. Two different quartets feature pianists Russ Freeman and Hampton Hawes; six quintet cuts utilize Jack Montrose on tenor sax and Claude Williamson on piano.

All the reissues feature original cover art (good, bad, and ugly), excellent remastering, and fold-out repros of original (at times equally dopey) liner notes. They're economically priced, but all are without extra cuts or outtakes, so they run the length of an LP.

Trombonist **Cutis Fuller** figures prominently on three of the first re-releases. *Blues-Elite* (0127; 36:45: ★★★★★) is a powerful quintet date from '59, with Benny Golson on tenor, Tommy Flanagan on piano, Jimmy Garrison on bass, and Al Harewood on drums. Golson is clearly trying to decide whether to follow John Coltrane, while Fuller plays with a characteristic mix of solid staccato and feather-tick tone. (Denon plans to record a Blues-Elite reunion disc with a new bassist.) Parts of *Jazz . . . It's Magic* (0153; 39:53: ★★★)—credited to Fuller but actually led by Flanagan—are as inspired, but a long, down-tempo medley is full of magic-less spots. The underrated alto of Sonny Redd complements Fuller well, and the rhythm section of George Tucker (bass) and Louis Hayes (drums) is sharp. Fuller's compositions (three on *Magic*, two on *Blues-Elite*) stand out as exemplary tunes from the blues-based school of hard bops. "Gold Coast" is his 14½-minute blowing vehicle on trumpeter **Wilbur Harden's *Jazz Way Out*** (0122; 28:47: ★★★★★½)—reissued a few times under Coltrane's name as *Dial Africa*. Trane's playing on the record is dumbfounding, waves of cascading notes washing ashore. An odd, engaging session, *Jazz Way Out* features unusual compositions that hint at Afro-centric and modal things to come.

Donald Byrd blows trumpet on four discs, his own *Byrd's Word* (0132; 36:52: ★★★★★), a hard-core 1955 recording with tenorist Frank Foster and sublime drumwork from Kenny Clarke, sadly marred by a reverb-crazed engineer. Klook drums with **Hank Jones** on a satiny trios-plus-guests set called *Bluebird* (0138; 42:25: ★★½), with guests including Byrd and Joe Wilder on trumpets, Herbie Mann on snoozy flute, Jerome Richardson on better flute



Art Pepper, jazz surfer

and tenor sax. **George Wallington** Quintet's *Jazz At Hotchkiss* (0119; 39:55: ★★★★★½) is a

rough but interesting outing from '57, with a frontline of Byrd and Phil Woods on alto sax. Wallington's piano style has a Mal Waldron-ish terseness to it; check out his strange solo on "Strange Music." On *The Jazz Message Of Hank Mobley* (0133; 41:20: ★★★★★), Kenny Clarke again swings the absolute shit out of two groups, only one of which actually uses Mobley. The other, with John LaPorta on alto and Horace Silver at the keys, is smoother and more reserved, where the Mobley sides (with Brit Ronnie Ball at piano) burn a bit. Byrd plays very nicely with both.

As a nonstop hard-bopper, Byrd's left in the dust by **Lee Morgan**, however. Even at 19, on *Introducing Lee Morgan* (0116; 36:01: ★★★★★), Morgan was astounding. He hadn't completely honed the trademark slurs, but his remarkable control and bright, inventive phrasing make this a great listen—not to mention Mobley, Hank Jones, Doug Watkins, and Art Taylor, all playing in top form. Slightly off-form were **Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers on *Midnight Session*** (0145; 36:39: ★★★★★½), circa '57, with Bill Hardman on trumpet, pianist Sam Dockery, bassist Spanky De Brest, and Jackie McLean on fantastic, pinched alto. Blakey, of course, plays brilliantly, especially on the extended roll-intro to Ray Draper's super-cool tune, "Ugh!" Not a bad disc, just not one of Blakey's best. **DB**

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Crimson Tide

by Jon Andrews

If you are a hard-core devotee of King Crimson (a "Crimhead," according to guitarist Robert Fripp), you must own *The Great Deceiver (Live 1973-1974)* (Discipline/Caroline Carol 1597-2; 76:43/67:04/74:58/76:41; ★★★★★), a four-CD compilation of fierce concert performances. The rest of us need, and get, something more than a souvenir of 20-

year-old concerts. An archival package prompts three questions: is the music worth salvaging, does it sound dated, and is the recording quality acceptable?

This version of Crimson played with driven intensity and dark fury. In a time of "smiley" buttons, this band did not wish anybody a happy day. Fripp's "type-A" guitar was the focal point. Instantly recognizable, Fripp attacked with the speed and precision of a striking rattlesnake. The success of a King Crimson date was inevitably tied to the quality and

quantity of Fripp's guitar. In concert, the songs became vehicles for reconstructions and experiments. *Great Deceiver* fascinates because it delivers extended "blows," free-form improvisations, and reworkings of familiar material. The improvs can settle into crunching, ominous grooves or drift out to the final frontier. Unless you were in attendance, you haven't heard anything quite like it.

While evolving from chamber-rock quartet to apocalyptic power trio, King Crimson matured into a high-energy, improvising ensemble encompassing rock rhythms, Hendrix-inspired



Driven intensely: (l-r) Cross, Wetton, Fripp, Bruford

guitar, and classical sensibilities. (Arguably, the Mahavishnu Orchestra arrived at the same place from a different direction.) Crimson's improvs and instrumentals have better staying power than their songs. Compositions like "Lark's Tongue In Aspic, Parts 1 And 2," and "Fracture" are revitalized by the band's reworking and improvising. The band has less enthusiasm for the songs, and John Wetton's vocals and (violinist) David Cross' keyboard mellotron distinctly predate "New Wave." Only Crimheads need to compare multiple versions of "Easy Money" and "Exiles." Anyone equipped with a programmable CD-player (and a personality) can easily skip the redundancies in the set.

Great Deceiver presents one complete concert with excerpts from three others, recorded for Fripp's library over an 18-month span. (Crimson came in from the road only long enough to record three studio albums: *Lark's Tongue In Aspic*, *Starless And Bible Black*, and *Red*.) The sound is startlingly clear, if imperfect. Fripp's guitar is tense and nasty; Wetton's bass has a deep, remorseless boom; and Bill Bruford, recently liberated from Yes, sounds hyperactive on drums and percussion.

The packaging is first-rate, including Fripp's copious, entertaining liner notes. Fripp rails against business aspects of his trade, and cautions young musicians. "Only become a professional musician if there is no choice." **DB**

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TODAY'S THE DAY
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Bassically Red

by Fred Bouchard

The late mellifluous and copacetic bassist **Red Mitchell** learned plenty about benign socialism living 20 years in Stockholm; he applies it on dates here as mellow mucilage that effects a gentle, firm bonding. Red also accumulated basses throughout his career, and his sound—smooth and elegant as firm Bordeaux—has depth and richness with character definition like vintages. He also began in 1966 to tune his instruments in fifths—C-G-D-A—to meet demands composers put on the bass.

Unusual fluidity of style and appreciative outlook slide Red in perfect complementary stances. He's live with guitarist Andy Fite on *Everybody Got Happy* (New Artists NA 1014; 71:03: ★★), blowing good-time, old-fashioned swing at Stockholm's Jazzklubb Fasching, with modernisms slipped in ("C Jam Blues"). Mitchell's generosity, space, and powerful yet avuncular melodism move unshyly to the fore. Here he's on a French Claudot (early 1800s), with a very flexible and expressive high end.

To go deeper, *That Was That* (Dragon DRCD 201; 72:01: ★★★★★) is a trio of bright jamming. Mitchell, strumming and humming his smoothest and richest legato counterpoint (again on the Claudot), exhibits profound listenership and low-profile ego. Jan Allen, physicist/trumpeter, exhibits the tight, pure sound, modulated volume, and limpid lyricism of Joe Wilder. They team with pianist Roger Kellaway, always a pleasure reassessing standards. Red's horsey, joshing vocals ("Leavin' Blues," the title track) strain as comic relief between astute ruminations and bear hugs.

A piano/drum/bass date with Kenny Barron and Ben Riley, *Talking* (Capri 74016-2; 68:33: ★★★★★), is especially companionable. On this deepest level, you'd be hard-pressed to find a trio swing with more conviction or spirited interplay than these old mates from Bradley's (University Place, Manhattan). They speak with warmth, pointedness, and occasional ("Locomotive") hilarity. Their swing, more often implied than bared, gets around to all sorts of cutting, curving, joshing. Mitchell lets his fingers do the talking—"um-hum" with Riley on a blues, shy stutters on "Um Er Ah," deep drones under Barron's "El Sueño," gospel waltzes for Red's dog on "Purest Heart." Here Red plays his #1 bass, a Mattias Klotz, vintage 1730 (Mittenwald, Germany), which is "easier to play, more even, with a warm buttery sound." He makes the darn thing sing "Don't Explain" with gliss, tremolo, and "wah-wah" trombone phrasing.



The companionable Red Mitchell

That's the one Red plays in his first-time reunion with Joe Pass, at that favorite Stockholm haunt. Seems that they'd heard each other on a California bandstand in 1953, but, despite on-the-spot mutual admiration, didn't get to play together. When Joe passed through Sweden in the summer of '90, they made a point of recording *Finally* (EmArcy 5048; 62:20:

★★★★). On this leisurely set, these old smoothies make lyric points on standards you've heard over and over, but rarely sounding as felicitous. Their elegant carriage clops slow (a sumptuous "I Thought About You") to a moderate jog ("Ms. Jones"), but with well-oiled wheels and nary a breakdown. The two apply honey to Jerome Kern, smoke to "These Foolish Things," and smear gravy on "Doxy." Sly jokes creep out (Mitchell's "Jada," "Doxy"), and they draw canny Swedes into their sophisticated fun-for-all.

The Red of Yore is a full-blown if less fleshy voice, still instantly recognizable, heard in line fettle on 1957's *Presenting Red Mitchell* (Contemporary OJCCD-158-2; 43:30: ★★★★★^{1/2}). On his first West Coast lead date (a 10-inch Bethlehem LP preceded it), it's amazing how light, happy, and lean they sounded then as now: Red, drummer Billy Higgins, reedman James Clay, the merry, concise pianist Lorraine Geller. "Scrapple From The Apple" and "Out Of The Blue" frame a pair of Red's pretty ballads and Sonny Rollins' "Paul's Pal" with soft flute and bass unison with brushes. Nobody has any idea how to make 'em like this any more: sunlight and breezes on a Pacific porch. Simple, idyllic. "I was playing the Lowendahl [ca. 1810] I'd bought in 1956," reminisces Red. "It had the biggest, longest ringing sound of any bass I've ever heard." **DB**

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CD REVIEWS



SHADOWLAND MEREDITH D'AMBROSIO

Shadowland is the new compact disc by the singer Meredith d'Ambrosio.

Accompanying her are pianist Eddie Higgins, who arranged the music for the session with violinist Johnny Frigo, bassist Jay Leonhart, drummer Ben Riley, cellist Erik Friedlander, Ron Kozak and Blair Tindall on woodwinds.



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Doug Ramsey
Jazz Times

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Billy Taylor

DR. T—GRP GRD-9692: I'LL REMEMBER APRIL; 'ROUND MIDNIGHT; LINE FOR LYONS; CUBANO CHANT; LUSH LIFE; WHO CAN I TURN TO; LAURENTIDE WALTZ; YOU'RE MINE; JUST THE THOUGHT OF YOU; RICO APOLLO. (56:41)

Personnel: Taylor, piano; Victor Gaskin, bass; Bobby Thomas, drums; Gerry Mulligan, baritone saxophone (2,3,9).

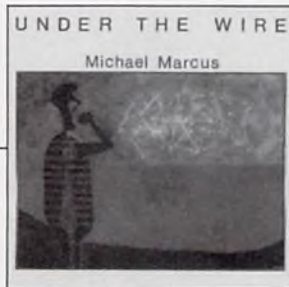
★ ★ ★ 1/2

Billy Taylor on GRP? It transpires that the good doctor does his neatly swinging trio thing exactly as usual here. The trim, tastefully decorated lines, the smooth reharmonizations, and the ability to swing with a sense of decorum are part of it. So, too, is his polished tone, expertly reproduced by the Taylor, Grusin, and Rosen crew.

Mulligan adds luster to the date with warm readings and improvisations on three tracks. On his "Line For Lyons," we have not only his bouncy lines but also Taylor's e.s.p.-like accompaniment. On Monk's venerable "Round Midnight" and Taylor's "Just The Thought Of You," bari and piano are a congenial match of romantic melodists. The trio tracks range from a meditative "Lush Life" (with a fine arco opening by Gaskin) to a pair of festive Latin numbers: Ray Bryant's "Cubano Chant" and Mulligan's "Rico Apollo." Taylor's impressionistic beginning to "I'll Remember April" beautifully sets up the group's dapper signature sound.

For those seeking eloquence and comfort in the jazz mainstream, this album is it.

—Owen Cordle



Michael Marcus

UNDER THE WIRE—enja 6064 2: GUMMIN'; BLUE HALO; DANCE OF THE ANGELS; PIPELINES; KINGDOM'S CHAIR; UNDER THE WIRE; COMMON GROUND; TRIBUTE. (52:20)

Personnel: Marcus, stritch, soprano saxophone, bass clarinet; Ted Daniel, trumpet; Joseph Bowie,

trombone; William Parker, bass; Reggie Nicholson, drums.

★ ★ ★ 1/2

For his debut album, Michael Marcus reconsiders avant-garde jazz styles from 1957 to the present. Wisely, he gets support from an experienced crew, including alumni of Cecil Taylor's and Henry Threadgill's bands and the Human Arts Ensemble. Marcus alternates reeds, reviving the stritch, a straight alto horn favored by Rahsaan Roland Kirk. Marcus' front line achieves unique voicings by joining various reeds with trumpet and trombone.

He understands the importance of emphasizing melody before turning his soloists loose, and his ensemble passages swing and swagger. "Gummin'" sounds like Mingus and Dolphy by way of the Art Ensemble of Chicago, and features Ted Daniel's muted trumpet. The horns tremble on the Ayler-esque title track, with Marcus playing soprano with appropriate vibrato. The stritch gives Marcus range and flexibility, with a distinctive tone. Dolphy's work on alto and bass clarinet is important to Marcus, and, on "Tribute," Ornette Coleman's influence is clear.

Bassist William Parker gets my vote for most valuable player on this session. Marcus uses Parker's arco bass to underline the horns while stating themes. Parker establishes continuity, linking solos, then walking or running alongside them. His playing has a versatility and swing I never heard in his days with Cecil.

—Jon Andrews

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Vienna Art Orchestra

A NOTION IN PERPETUAL MOTION—hat ART 6096: SIGHTS FROM SOUTH CORINTHIA; WOODWORMS IN THE ROOTS; VOICES WITHOUT WORDS; LIFE AT THE DEAD SEA; LADY DELAY; ROMANA; A NATURAL SOUND; 'ROUND MIDNIGHT; FRENCH ALPHORN; H.M. BLUES. (76:38)

Personnel: Lauren Newton, voice; Hannes Kottek, Karl "Bumi" Fian, trumpet, flugelhorn; Wolfgang Pusching, alto sax, soprano piccolo, flute; Harry Sokal, soprano sax, tenor sax, flute; Roman Schwaller, tenor sax; Christian Radovan, trombone; John Sass, tuba; Woody Schabata, marimba, vibes; Uli Scherer, piano, Fender piano, Yamaha DX-7; Heiri Keanzig, bass; Joris Dudli, Wolfgang Reisinger, drums, percussion.

★ ★ ★ ★ 1/2

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 40

Oregon . . . But Not Forgotten

by Jon Andrews

Musical cross-pollination might be the most significant trend of the last few years, as innovators and camp-followers explore forms from other cultures and other genres. Oregon anticipated the boom in "global folk music" by about two decades, creating a hybrid of instrumental, acoustic music informed by ethnic folk, jazz, and classical traditions, and sparked by its members' improvisations. A new release and two important reissues mark where they are, and where they came from.

Coming three years after the group's last recording, *Always, Never, And Forever* (Intuition 2073 2; 61:21: ★★★★★) is a strong return to form and basics. Ralph Towner plays more piano and guitar (12-string and classical) here than on any Oregon album in years. He's scaled back his use of synthesizers, reversing an '80s trend. Tunes like Towner's reprise of "Aurora" and bassist Glen Moore's ghostly "Apology Nicaragua" set an introspective tone. Towner's "Renewal" offers hope and a gorgeous Paul McCandless oboe line. Trilok Gurtu gives the ensemble flexibility in percussion, shifting smoothly between hand drums and traps, maintaining the right pulse. *Always, Never, And Forever* delivers what you expect from Oregon—complex, tuneful interaction from a balanced collective of strong musical personalities.

The group's original lineup, which included the late Collin Walcott on percussion, inspired multi-cultural investigation, as well as flat-out imitation. *Out Of The Woods* (Discovery 71004; 42:51: ★★★★★) and *Roots In The Sky* (Discovery 71005; 44:18: ★★★★★) were recorded in 1978 and 1979 for Elektra, which inexplicably deleted them. Crafted with "major label" production values, *Out Of The Woods* puts Oregon on a plateau in terms of the lyricism and sheer beauty of the writing and performances. The solos, notably Towner on piano and McCandless on oboe, develop thoughtfully from the tunes, which have a pastoral beauty throughout. Carefully sequenced and packed with strong themes, including "Waterwheel," "Yellow Bell," and Jim Pepper's "Witchi-Tai-To," *Out Of The Woods* may be the best introduction to the group.

Roots In The Sky is faster and more percussive, with ethereal chamber-music influences giving way to rhythm and grit. It more closely approximates Oregon's live performances, which feature a fair amount of collective im-



BO OVERLOCK

Complex, tuneful interaction: (l-r) Glen Moore, Paul McCandless, Collin Walcott, Ralph Towner

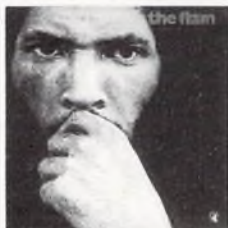
provision. Walcott's contributions to both albums are remarkable; he's everywhere, doubling oboe or piano with sitar, bouncing tabla rhythms off Moore's bass lines, and weaving

thick textures with mbira (thumb piano) and hammered dulcimer. These albums were strikingly original when released, and still sound fresh today.

DB

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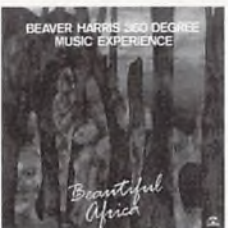
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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 38

ble ingenuity, and fiendish wit of its chief architect, Mathias Rüegg. The VAO is making the world safe for danger. The VAO puts forth provocative avant-garde big-band concepts at a time when traditionalism is threatening to choke off the supply of fresh ideas.

Recorded live in 1985, *A Notion In Perpetual Motion* is a full plate of wildly inventive music bringing to fruition the merger of venerable American jazz ideas—Ellingtonia reconsidered, a new reading of "Round Midnight"—European classical music, Eurofolk ("French Alphorn"), and madcap cabaret hijinx.

One of the distinctive facets in the VAO arsenal is the voice of Lauren Newton, whose limber vocalizing is heard as if part of the horn section. On "Voices Without Words," she brandishes antic extended vocal techniques, splitting the difference between contemporary art song and the stuff of a jazz big-band "girl singer." At times, Newton's long tones meld with Woody Schabata's mallet work to create a happy, hard/soft pairing. Schabata's marimba kicks off the dizzying "Woodworm In The Roots," which accelerates maniacally, then slows back down to a woozy crawl and a sassy melody. For VAO, rhythm is a flexible thing, as is tonal centering.

—Josef Woodard



Trilok Gurtu

LIVING MAGIC—CMP CD 50: *BABA; LIVING MAGIC; ONCE I WISHED A TREE UPSIDE DOWN...; TRANSITION; FROM SCRATCH; TAC, ET DEMI; TANOK.* (42:38)

Personnel: Gurtu, drums, tabla, congas, percussion, voice; Jan Garbarek, tenor, soprano saxes (1,3); Nana Vasconcelos, congas, percussion, voice; Daniel Goyone, keyboards; Nicolas Fiszman, guitar, bass; Tunde Jegede, kora, cello; Shanthy Rao, veena.

★★★★

When Trilok Gurtu works with the John McLaughlin Trio, speed is at a premium. The percussionist's solo projects emphasize his versatility within a range of styles including tabla and drum kit. He plays jazz, ethnic, whatever is needed, and plays it well. Gurtu's *Living Magic* is a melting pot with a beat. The core group consists of Gurtu, Nana Vasconcelos, and French keyboardist Daniel Goyone, who draws on the techno-jungle electronics of Zawinul and Jon Hassell.

The McLaughlin Trio recorded Gurtu's "Baba" as a blues. In this earlier incarnation, Jan Garbarek's tenor sax emerges from ominous electronics, joining Gurtu's sharp attack

and Goyone's synth-bass for a grim, accelerating ride into the heart of darkness. Garbarek's "Once I Wished" surrounds his soprano horn with tabla, shakers, and talking drum for an infectious, cheerful folk song. Percussion duets between Gurtu and Vasconcelos show a high level of empathy. "Transition" and "Toc, et demi" open with tight, cultural exchanges among congas and tabla, before giving way to more dark, urgent grooves.

Gurtu and Goyone throw everything into the pot: Weather Report, Indian, African, Brazilian, and Asian elements. The resulting alloy is strong and flexible. Throughout, Gurtu is at the forefront, and his drums are carefully recorded with meticulous imaging and detail.

—Jon Andrews



Geri Allen

MAROONS—Blue Note 0777 7 99493 2 8: *FEED THE FIRE I; NO MORE MR. NICE GUY; AND THEY PARTED; NUMBER FOUR; A PRAYER FOR PEACE; MAD MONEY; TWO BROTHERS; FEED THE FIRE II; DOLPHY'S DANCE; FOR JOHN MALACHI; LAILA'S HOUSE; FEED THE FIRE III; BROOKLYN BOUND "A"; BED-STY; MAROONS.* (72:21)

Personnel: Allen, piano; Marcus Belgrave (4,9), Wallace Roney (3,5,6,9-11,15), trumpet; Anthony Cox (3,5,7,8), Dwayne Dolphin (2,3,7-9,11-15), bass; Pheeroan akLaff (1,3,5,6,8), Tani Tabbal (1-3,8,9,11-15), drums.

★★★★

On "Mad Money," one of Allen's 13 original compositions on *Maroons*, don't even bother keeping track of the beat. Just lie back and listen to her sail by with trumpeter Roney. Allen's an expert at flying blind with a line, in the daredevil tradition of beboppers. She revels in off-kilter meters and the harmonic intricacies of "Dolphy's Dance." On "Laila's House," abrupt time changes just click into place.

Allen's compositional chops are in order, too. Twice she brings back the tune "Feed The Fire" for a heated new look. Repeated patterns anchor her compositions even when they veer into abstraction. The other musicians on *Maroons* understand Allen. Trumpeter Marcus Belgrave, her mentor from Detroit days, sounds especially attuned to her. He weaves and she bobs in perfect choreography on Lawrence Williams' "Number Four."

Not every track of *Maroons* is stellar. More time devoted to fewer tunes might have let the listener get closer to the creative spirit here. Maybe Allen the producer just underestimated the appeal of Allen the composer and pianist. When the music's this hot, people will stick around.

—Elaine Guregian

Exhumation & Expoopidence

by David Whiteis

The much-ballyhooed opening of the Vee-Jay vaults has unearthed its first set of long-buried gems, and it was worth the wait. The label was virtually all things to virtually all people: down-home blues (most notably Jimmy Reed, to come later), gospel, mainstream jazz, doo-wop, and r&b.

On the jazz front, pianist **Wynton Kelly's** *Someday My Prince Will Come* (Vee-Jay 902; 76:38; ★★★★★) is impeccably-swung, with melodicism and harmonic sophistication. Kelly's treble lines sparkle joyfully, with an undercurrent of churchy soul. The title song is remarkably similar to Bill Evans' version, though bassist Sam Jones and drummer Jimmy Cobb don't quite achieve the loose-limbed swing of Scott LaFaro and Paul Motian. "Gone With The Wind" has a rougher-sounding mix and jammier feel propelled by Kelly's linear, almost horn-like phrases. Then there's "Weird Lullaby" with drummer Philly Joe Jones' dashes of off-rhythm punctuation, over which Kelly builds delicate diminished-minor ascensions.

Taste is king on tenor saxist **Wayne Shorter's** *Waning Moments Plus* (900; 62:49; ★★★★★). Almost California-cool at times ("Black Orpheus"), it's none-the-less hard-swinging, with ventures into challenging harmonic structures ("Dead End," "Waning Moments") where the chords rub roughly against each other—haunting, yet forward-moving and celebratory. Trumpeter Freddie Hubbard sounds a little tentative, but already there's that clarion tone and whiff of angry-young-man declamatory force. This is a tantalizing glimpse of protean talents on the verge of breaking into full bloom.

I don't know what *Expoopidence* means, but it feels like the music on **Lee Morgan's** disc of the same title (901; 52:33; ★★★★★). Here's the fiery young trumpeter ablaze, even on medium-swingers he literally blasts out at you (his attack is so sharp that some of his notes pop like minor explosions). Even when muted ("Easy Living," the Miles-ish "Triple Track"), Morgan retains his force. Clifford Jordan's tenor, meanwhile, is Dexterous with its liquid suppleness as it dances and builds upon harmonic subtleties. On the flag-waving "Lost And Found," Jordan takes the lead with lithe, smooth phrases that get bluesier and road-housier with every measure.

From uptown to the 'hood: the **El Dorados'** *Bim Bam Boom* (702; 66:56; ★★★★★) is timeless under-the-streetlight doo-wop. The lyrics are irresistibly adolescent (but lustful), redeemed from their own raunch by lugubrious romanticism ("My Loving Baby"). The material extends from bluesy moaners ("One More Chance") to arrangements and melodies of considerable complexity ("Lights Are Low"); unlike some doo-wop groups, these guys sang effortlessly on key and in tune.

Despite the **Dells'** reputation as a slick pop group, *Dreams Of Contentment* (701; 66:30; ★★★★★) reminds us that they were a rough-



Lee Morgan: blasting out at you

though, is forever the smoldering love song (the original "Stay In My Corner" remains one of the most heart-stopping ballads in the annals of pop history).

Chicagoan **Jerry Butler** began smooth, and went on from there. *The Ice Man* (700; 67:45: ★★★★★) showcases Butler in all his eclectic glory. "For Your Precious Love," his monument, is still breathtaking; the early risings of social consciousness in his music ("I Don't Want To Hear It Anymore") are edifying. Although Butler later gravitated toward violin-drenched bathos ("I've Grown Accustomed To Her Face"), there are still some gems in his later period, such as the soulfully rocking "I Can't Stand It."

But where'd all this come from? The **Staple Singers'** *Uncloudy Day & Will The Circle Be Unbroken?* (600; 64:48: ★★★★★) provides a partial answer. Backed by Roebuck "Pops" Staples' haunting, bluesy guitar (complete with tremolo, years before Robert Ward did it), the Staples fuse secular stylizations ("Let Me Ride" and "If I Could Hear My Mother Pray" chug along like rockabilly train songs) with passionate, deep harmonies, ascending into a near-mystical state of fervor ("Low Is The Way"). If this is what those churches back home sounded like, it's astounding that the jukes ever did any business.

The **Original Five Blind Boys of Mississippi**—*The Great Lost Blind Boys Album* (601; 49:55: ★★★★★) used organ instead of guitar,

but the effect was the same: an hypnotic drone overlaid with heavenly harmonies. Archie Brownlee, the doomed vocal genius who helped revolutionize gospel vocalizing in the '40s, sings of salvation as if he's experienced the other side. "All Over Me" washes all over you with its exuberance and rich harmonies (here's where Sam Cooke went to school); "I Never Heard A Man" kicks off with a fuzzy guitar riff that sounds like a '50s-era Memphis blues outtake. These songs defined the callow longing that a generation of streetcorner adolescents eventually transformed into a million-selling pop style. **DB**

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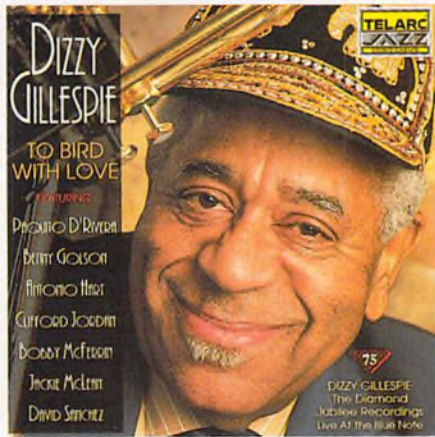
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CD REVIEWS

Swedish Miles

by Howard Mandel

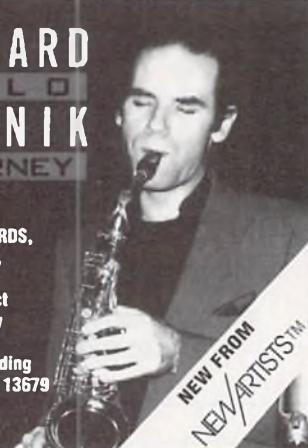
The first "So What" of the two extraordinarily fine concerts documented on the four-CD **Miles Davis With John Coltrane And Sonny Stitt In Stockholm 1960 Complete** (Dragon DRCD 228; 70:43/62:41/50:02/75:20; ★★★★★) has a brisk clarity that is nothing less than inspired. Miles really leads. Fleet of thought and execution, elegantly and incisively articulating detailed runs and phrases way up over bar lines, the trumpeter demonstrates his mastery as a fact, not for his personal vanity.

uncharacteristic false-fingered(?) bleating on "All Blues," the sound of sax to come.

Stitt, technically slick and sure on both his horns (compare his alto in duo with Kelly on "Dolphin" with his tenor after Miles' solo), can be overly calculating, predictable (at least in hindsight), even corny in his interpretations. Still, he had true rapport with Miles, oil to the trumpeter's vinegar. In their blend the two can combust suddenly—and Miles is encouraged to be expansive, fully brash in one passage, whispering low in another, warm and dulcet as on "All Of Me."

Besides informative liner notes and sharp if mislabeled photos (that's Cobb, not Chambers, hitting a cymbal), this repackaging of two

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Miles Davis with Paul Chambers: nothing less than inspired

Coltrane follows cautiously, as though watching where he puts his feet, but he's soon racing through double-tongued notes to reach something beyond them. Pianist Wynton Kelly comps and stretches with sparkling ideas—sustained tremolos, contrarily moving lines, fresh modulations, a less-is-more philosophy—that gave Herbie Hancock a place to begin. The Paul Chambers/Jimmy Cobb rhythm team is implacable, unobtrusive, and steady as they come. So what! The set continues, rich with Davis' creativity and reflexes, dramatic flourishes, poise, and diffidence; Trane's obsessive searching, which is sometimes brushed with melancholy; and a rhythm section that's all taste.

Dragon LPs includes eight previously unreleased pieces from the Stitt date and Carl-Erik Lindgren's smarmy radio interview with Trane, who remains dignified and responsive throughout. Sound quality is state-of-the-art (stereo) for a live remote, more distant than studio recording but delivering Kelly's touch, Chamber's attack, and Cobb's accents as well as the horns with honest depth. **DB**

Despite repertorial familiarity (the surprises, "June Night," "Stardust," and "Makin' Whoopee," are features for Kelly and Stitt), the March performance from Coltrane's final tour with Miles and the October show with Stitt on board contain revelations regarding melodic, harmonic, and tonal development that have not yet been turned into clichés. For two, there's Trane's outside-from-deep-inside "On Green Dolphin Street," and his extended choruses of

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Oscar Winner

by Owen Cordle

When **Oscar Peterson** went to perform and record at MPS producer Hans Georg Brunner-Schwer's Black Forest villa throughout the mid-'60s, there were no demands. He was there because of the respect for the brilliant sound engineer, who invited a small, select audience of jazz-piano fans to attend Peterson's private concerts in his living room. Peterson responded to the setting, hospitality, and intimacy with what he would later describe as the best recordings he had ever made.



JAN PERSSON

Oscar Peterson: simply brilliant

The music, originally released on six MPS LPs, has been reissued as *Exclusively For My Friends* (Verve 314 513 830-2; 68:50/67:14/61:03/41:04; ★★★★★), a four-CD set that awesomely reconfirms this opinion. Regardless of criticism leveled at Peterson in the past—empty virtuosity, a mechanical approach to swing, lack of originality (with too-frequent reliance on Art Tatum), inability to play the blues honestly—this set stands in defiance. Peterson controls his vast technique at all times. On the blistering tempos of Francy Boland's "Sax No End" and the traditional "Travelin' On," for example, he fits the most swirling phrases into the line while maintaining his huge sense of swing. At the other metric pole, his ballad performances never appear overbusy. "I'm In The Mood For Love" and "Emily," for example, initially ride on a hushed restraint—and when Peterson turns up the heat, he chooses harmonically rich, middle-register block chords wholly in keeping with the opening mood. Throughout the set, his ballad work often evolves into this kind of impressionistic harmonic elaboration, as if he's showing that Bill Evans wasn't the only chordal pacesetter of the period.

The earliest tracks were recorded with bassist Ray Brown and drummer Ed Thigpen in 1963. However, the majority of the trio tracks include Sam Jones on bass and Bobby Durham on drums, with Louis Hayes in for Durham on two tracks. Brown's walking bass is exemplary on Billy Taylor's "Easy Walker," as is Jones' on "In A Mellotone." Vol. 4, recorded in 1968, is all solo piano.

The clarity of Brunner-Schwer's original recording remains untarnished on this CD version. (Aside: For more Peterson from this period and earlier, hear *The Will To Swing*, a two-CD set on Verve that came out in 1991.) **DB**

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Hawk's In Charge

by Jack Sohmer

Among the most important dates ever recorded by the Apollo label during the mid-'40s were those led by **Coleman Hawkins** and Georgie Auld. Of all the times in his long, illustrious career, this was the then-and-future reigning tenorman's most productive period, as is evidenced here in part by *Rainbow Mist* (Delmark 459; 44:51; ★★★★★). Besides Hawkins' rapturous evocations of the title tune (in actuality, "Body And Soul"), "Yesterdays," and "Feeling Zero," there are also the first full-fledged bop solos of trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie on "Woody'n You," "Disorder At The Border," and "Bu Dee Daht." Charlie Shavers subs for Dizzy quite commendably on the Auld/Hawkins/Webster Saxtet date that follows, but though we also hear some inspired solos from the two other tenormen (not to overlook Auld's alto on "Uptown Lullaby," the equal of his Websterian tenor elsewhere), it's never in doubt that Hawk is the man in charge. Concluding this nominee for Best Reissue Of 1992 is a superlative four-tune session by Auld's 1944 big band.

As one testament to the almost overwhelm-



Coleman Hawkins: rapturous evocations

ing popularity of Illinois Jacquet during the '40s, one need search no further than r&b tenorman **Willis Jackson's** *Call Of The Gators* (Delmark 460; 40:29; ★★½). Jackson did have a huge, deep tone, a partially redeeming

attribute he showcases on such slower tunes as "Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man" and "More Blues At Midnight," but he was also given to tasteless honking and ideationally barren clichés. *West Coast Jive* (Delmark 657; 52:42; ★★★) is a well-assembled collection of 1945-'46 sides by r&b singers **Wynonie Harris**, **Cee Pee Johnson**, **Duke Henderson**, and others. However, it is not so much the vocalists that assure our interest in this reissue, but the jazz soloists, i.e., Lucky Thompson on Henderson's "H. D. Blues" and "Not Worth A Dime," Illinois Jacquet on Harris' "Wynonie Blues," and Teddy Buckner on several of Cee Pee's sides.

Pete Johnson's *Central Avenue Boogie* (Delmark 656; 40:20; ★★½) justly celebrates one of the truly authentic barrelhouse pianists, but his 1949-'50 output for Apollo was so slender that, of his 11 tracks on this CD, three are previously unissued alternate takes of "Hollywood Boogie." Of the remainder, the stride-based "Margie" (sic: should read "Marie"), "66 Stomp," and "Minuet Boogie" speak the most, primarily because they disclose another dimension of Johnson's Kansas City roots. Fleshing out the disc are three boogie solos by the obscure Arnold Wiley. In light of the above, then, it would have been wise to first check out Johnson's more representative 1939 recordings on Classics 665 and Mosaic MR1-119 before investing in this gap-filler. **DB**

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Boukman Eksperyans

KALFOU DANJERE—Mango 162-539 927-2: *BAY BONDYE GLWA; TANDE M TANDE; JOU NOU REVOLTE; KOUMAN SA TA YE; NANM NAN BOUTEY; BADE XILE; ZANSET NOU YO; NWEL INOSAN; EVE; FEY; VODOU ADJAE; KALFOU DANJERE; MAYI A GAYE.* (60:41)

Personnel: Theodore "Lolo" Beaubrun, Jr., vocals, keyboards, tambou; Daniel "Dady" Beaubrun, vocals, guitar, bass, drum programming; Mimirose "Manze" Beaubrun, Marjorie Beaubrun, Maguy Jean-Louis, vocals; Gary Seney, vocals, tambou, kata; Henry Joseph-Pierre, vocals, katabou, percussion; Michel Melthon "Olich" Lynch, vocals, tambou, percussion; Hans "Bwa Gris" Dominique, tambou, percussion; Gaston Jean-Baptiste, tambou (7).

★★★★★

Foula

FOULA—Sound Wave 89012-4: *KAMIMIZIYE; NEG DAP POT; SOVE; JOUKE; AFRICA; JEFO; PAWOLI; ENFLAYSON; GEDEMAZAKA.*

Personnel: Jean Raymond Giglio, Gaston Jean-Baptiste, tambou; Wilfrid "Tito" Lavaud, vocals, guitar; Yves Boyer, vocal (8), bass; Thurgot Theodat, saxophones; Hari Sanon, percussion, bell.

★★★★ 1/2

catches the surging wave of momentum, as on "Jouke," the result sounds uncannily like free-jazz—which is exactly the idea. The voodoo-jazz concept works like a charm, opening whole new worlds for future exploration.

—Larry Birnbaum



Steps Ahead

YIN-YANG—NYC 6001 2: *SIDEWALK MANEUVERS; PRAISE; NITE OWL; TAXI; TAMARIN LION; GORY DETAILS; AGITATE THE GRAVEL; OKAPI; ORION; STEP-FISH; SARA'S TOUCH.* (61:25)

Personnel: Mike Mainieri, MIDI Vibraharp, Synclavier, percussion; Bendik, Rick Margitza (1,10), saxophones; Rachel Z., piano, synths; Jeff Andrews, Victor Bailey (3), Alan Thomson (7), bass; Steve Smith, drums; Jimi Tunnell (1,2,4), Steve Khan (1,3,6,8,10), Wayne Krantz (5,8), Chuck Loeb (3), Dean Brown (2), guitar; George Whitty (1), Spencer Cozens (7), synthesizer; Miles Bould, percussion (7).

★★★

Steps Ahead the next Spyro Gyra? Leader Mike Mainieri wouldn't mind their sales I'm sure, but I sense some of Steps' followers are mighty concerned about the group's playful edge. While watering the Steps Ahead mixture down a little too far for the band's faithful, this music

isn't all fluff; but for many jazz and fusion purists, it will not rise to expectations.

With all due respect to saxman Bendik, who blows real funky on "Nite Owl" and "sells" his ballad "Tamarin Lion," the "ghost" of Michael Brecker still haunts this group. Bendik's haughty tenor work on "Okapi" does give us hope. Steve Smith is certainly the perfect *play-all* trapsman for this one-stop groove headquarters, and he and Andrews work together with great feel and precision.

They don't seem to have been able to settle on a guitarist, although they parade some of the best pickers in the business through—Khan, Krantz, Tunnell, and Loeb all provide different shadings. Mainieri proves to be the best soloist in the band, keeping a melody line close to his vest or stretching the action a little bit on the welcome feisty-ness of a tune like "Taxi." I just hope Mainieri doesn't stretch himself too thin. Any less musical beef and Steps Ahead fans will be putting out the distress signal.

—Robin Tolleson



Jim Cooper

NUTVILLE—Delmark 457: *NUTVILLE; MALLETHEAD; MIJA; BEMSHA SWING; CANTOR DA NOITE;*

Boukman's bubbly, tuneful sound is led by the sweetly harmonized call-and-response vocals of leader Theodore "Lolo" Beaubrun, Jr. and his wife Mimerose over electric guitar, keyboard bass, and voodoo percussion. However, by reading the English translation of Creole lyrics like "The day has arrived for us to make a revolution," from "Jou Nou Revolte," you realize there's something subversive going on. It's hard to believe that the Haitian government censored the gently melancholy Christmas song "Nwel Inosan"; the banning of the title track, an ecstatic 10-minute anthem that rollicks relentlessly over *rara* carnival rhythms and fuzz guitar as it taunts, "Assassins, you're in deep trouble," is at least comprehensible. It's not politics, however, but the seamlessly textured blend of African and Western motifs—from the springy South African-style bass line of "Kouman Sa Ta Ye" to the reggae refrain of "Zanset Nou Yo" to the churchy a-cappella chorus of "Fey"—that makes *Kalfou Danjere* so dazzling.

In contrast to Boukman's glossy pop production, Foula's spare, stripped-down mix sounds like a garage recording. There's little variation in the material: each tune begins with a choppy guitar riff over a bass vamp, followed by unison vocal chanting and squawking tenor or soprano sax. But the two percussionists, laying down a non-stop barrage of oddly syncopated folk rhythms, propel the music irresistibly forward; and when saxist Thurgot Theodat

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SUI FUMI; AUTUMN NOCTURNE; CABBIE PATCH; TANGA. (66:17)

Personnel: Cooper, vibraphone; Ira Sullivan, trumpet, tenor and soprano saxes; Bob Dogan, piano; Dan DeLorenzo, bass; Charlie Braugham, drums; Alejo Poveda, percussion.

★★★

Cooper's second album as a leader is a warm wind blowing out of the Windy City, a suave mainstream session highlighted by solid solo

work from the vibist with multi-instrumental bravura by Ira Sullivan. Cooper savors Latin-jazz feels, but he's also got a Monk bug in his veins, as witness the eccentric Monk-ish head of his composition "Mallethead" and the reading of Monk's "Bemsha Swing," on which the percussive nature of vibes complements the tune's loopy cadences. A little more loopiness from the band as a whole would have been in order, but *Nutville* is a friendly, easygoing place to visit.

—Josef Woodard



Steve Roach & Robert Rich

SOMA—Hearts of Space 11033: LOVE MAGIC; NIGHTSHADE; GOING INLAND; SILA RIDGE; BLOOD MUSIC; SOMA; SEDUCTION OF THE MINOTAUR; TOUCH. (57:17)

Personnel: Roach, synthesizers, sampler, drum programming, didjeridu, voice, clay water pots, rainstick, rocks, various percussions, Lakota Indian flute, ocarinas, glurp; Robert Rich, synthesizers, samplers, bamboo and clay flutes, steel guitar, drum programming, Udu clay drums, dumbek, ceramic talking drum, Waterphone, kalimba, rainstick, various percussion, glurp; Linda Kohanov, frame drum cries, swirls, and scratches (5,7).

★★★★

Delicately traipsing along the boundary between intuitive native musical impressions and post-digital conjurings, Roach and Rich (with help from Kohanov) demonstrate some evocative possibilities between the cracks of existing genres. They freely and unapologetically blend ethnic instruments and synth/sampling gear and avoid many of the pitfalls of too many new-age noodlers, instead following a reliable musical muse into a dark, hypnotic realm that wafts of mysticism rather than marketing.

—J.W.



Oren Bloedow

OREN BLOEDOW—Knitting Factory Works 120: THE UNBREAKABLE MAN; SLEAZINESS; BREAK THIS SPELL; FALLING RAIN; A LITTLE CONTACT; THERE'S THAT SKY; BIG WHAT; NOBODY HOME; SEESAW; ONE LOOK. (50:46)

Personnel: Bloedow, vocals; Danny Blume, guitar; Dan Levine, trombone; John Medeski, piano, organ; Ed Pastorini, Jennifer Charles, vocals (4); Dave Ratajczak, drums.

★★★ 1/2

Oren Bloedow's limber, conceptual pop organ-ism, bolstered by unusual horn arrangements and oblique stylistic references, manages a rare balancing act by being both brainy and

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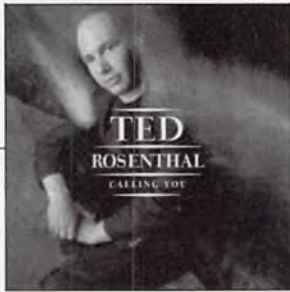
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soulful. Lyric-wise, he covers the mental and actual urban front. Betraying a resume that includes work with the Lounge Lizards, Otis Rush, and various NYC Downtowners, Bloedood goes in multiple directions at once, toys with odd meters, and shifts from kookily kinetic art-rock tunes to the sweetly lyrical "Falling Rain."

—J.W.



Ted Rosenthal

CALLING YOU—CTI 79483: *CALLING YOU; SEA SONG; GROOVE CONTROL; PARA LOS PAPINES; LA SOIREE DANS GRENADE; BIJOU; MODEL A. (43:41)*

Personnel: Rosenthal, piano; Donald Harrison, saxes, vocals (1); Bobby Hutcherson, vibes (1,2,4,6); Kevin Eubanks, guitar (3,5,7); Lew Soloff, flugelhorn, trumpet (1,3,5); Jim Pugh, euphonium, trombone (1,3,5); Ken Bichel, synthesizer (1,2,5); Eddie Gomez (3,5,7); John Palfittucci (2); Francisco Centeno (1,4,6), bass; Dave Weckl, drums; Bashiri Johnson, Frank Valdez (4,6), percussion.

★ ★ 1/2

Rosenthal, winner of the second Monk Piano Competition, serves up a song set varied enough—from groovy pop-jazz to Latin to swing to a Debussy redux—to elude a unified identity and blur his best eclectic intentions. On the downside, doses of happy-jazz, slick sonorities, and dated washes of reverb tend to counteract the musical qualities contained herein. Harrison lends burnished beauty with his vocal on Bob Telson's "Calling You" (from the film *Baghdad Cafe*), and provides some bright saxophonic moments along the way.

—J.W.

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VIDEO REVIEWS

Stringing Along On The Tube

by Josef Woodard

The instructional video market is gradually redefining the way education works. Guitar and bass videos have caught on, for at least one good reason: close-up shots of hands in action become them.

As illustrated in this sampling of recently released videos, there is more than one way to address the video-lesson concept. Some merely play their music and attempt to break it down, finding in their own styles handy hints and techniques; others focus more objectively on specific topics.

Accomplished folk-jazz bassist **Michael Manring's** *Bass Essentials* (Hot Licks, 60 minutes) is not for the impatient or those seeking a quick fix of video licks. A kind of "Zen And The Art Of Practicing The Bass," the video proceeds at a calm, deliberate pace, aimed at illustrating Manring's emphasis on "developing a relaxed body and a concentrated state of mind" while practicing.

To this end, Manring discusses the importance of attitude when approaching the

business of practicing, deals with hand positions, and demonstrates—in real time—some very elemental exercises and warm-up techniques. Manring also spends time persuasively advocating the use of the traditional four-string bass and also open tunings as a way of discovering new musical ideas. At lesson's end, Manring performs one of his lyrical but dazzling displays of two-fisted solo bass impressionism.

Guitarist **Frank Gambale** can shred with the best of the current fusion players, as he demonstrates on his new video with heated fretwork on his tune "High Five," from his album *Note Worker* (JVC). But, for the most part, on *Modes: No More Mystery* (DCI Music Video, 60 min.), Gambale gets down to the business of teaching the specific area promised by the title. The video delivers a surprisingly lucid and useful explanation of modes, of special value to rock guitarists seeking to pursue jazz theory and break out of rudimentary harmonic habits.

Gambale cleanly breaks down the modes into major scales in varying intervallic relationships to the root key of C. He illustrates common usages of each mode, setting up appropriate chordal vamps, and demonstrating typical improvisation on each—while keeping his playing restrained enough to follow. On a simple piece he calls "Moods," Gambale combines three modes, neatly illustrating the adaptability of different modes within a tune.

In *Jazz Chord Workouts* (Hot Licks, 60 min.), veteran jazzier **Joe Beck** lays out an array of ideas on the subject. Over the course of the video, he manages to offer something for nearly everyone, a real workout for beginners and a few choice, personalized maneuvers for the diehard jazz player.

Beck begins at the beginning—by showing how basic triads can be worked up in easy patterns up and down the neck. But triads are not an end unto themselves: later, he suggests that triads can be "too dictatorial." Beck touches on several areas, including locating common tones amongst shifting chords, changing chords under a melody, and using chord substitutions.

Beck puts his ideas to good use on "Darn That Dream" and a blues, illustrating his notion, stated early in the video, that "without a musical mind attached to it, the guitar is just a hunk of wood with some steel strings on it."

There is a basic problem with the title of *The Essential Steve Morse* (DCI, 60 min.). Is it possible to tap into the essence of a highly developed player such as Morse in the space of an hour? Of course not. But what



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ACCESSORIES

1 Lee Morgan

"Speedball" (from *THE GIGOLO*, Blue Note, 1964).

Lee! That's "Speedball" [*hums along, with a variety of gestures*]. Wayne Shorter [on tenor], Billy Higgins, too [on drums]. I really liked the things they did together, very personal. You automatically know it's them! I've heard records Lee and Wayne made with Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers. Lee does a lot of half-valve things, plays with a lot of blues influence, a fiery sound. 4 stars.

2 Illinois Jacquet Big Band

"Tickletoe" (from *JACQUET'S GOT IT!*, Atlantic, 1988) Jacquet, tenor sax; Irving Stokes, Jon Faddis, trumpet solos.

That's Faddis. There's a cat who can take anything up an octave. Listen to that: pow! And you look at his embouchure and he's . . . relaxed. No strain on his face whatsoever. He'll even look at you while he hits the note. Heh heh. I'm standing next to him [at a jazz festival], and he was just amazing! It sounded like a recent recording. The tenor player had a [Eddie] Lockjaw [Davis] vibe. 3½ stars for that. I also liked the first trumpet solo—he ended it differently than he started it.

3 Dizzy Reece

"The Rake" (from *STAR BRIGHT*, Blue Note, 1959) Wynton Kelly, piano.

Sounded like a reissued Blue Note album, recorded at Rudy Van Gelder's studio—the bass, the piano. [Rudy's] piano had a certain sound, whether Herbie [Hancock] or McCoy [Tyner] played it. Is that Mulgrew [Miller]? I liked the trumpet player's attack, very clean, something like Booker Little. That could be Horace Silver on piano; one cat who played with him, Blue Mitchell, learned a lot from Clifford. The melody has a humorous quality to it [*hums along*]. 4. That's one of my favorite periods of recording—the early '60s.

4 Dizzy Gillespie

"Free Ride" (from *FREE RIDE*, Pablo, 1977).

That's Dizzy—I'd know him, like Miles, no matter what they played. He made this in the disco era of the late '70s. I didn't want to say it at first, but I know his sound immediately. I like anything Dizzy does. Miles, too. A lot of people criticized what Miles was doing

ROY HARGROVE

by Fred Bouchard



CEDRIC THOMPSON

The Texas Tenor tradition has long been established, and Texas Trumpets are not far behind. Hot Lips Page. Kenny Dorham . . . now Dallas born-and-bred Roy Hargrove, 22, media darling and solid player. Frontlining a new quintet with old pal Antonio Hart on alto saxophone, Hargrove's fourth Novus release, a live date recorded just outside San Francisco, will be out sometime this

summer.

Roy's prepossession with checking out his elders prompted a Blindfold Test slanted more toward history than his peers. He was given no information up-front on the cuts that were played; all leaders play trumpet except cut #2; personnel are correct as guessed except when listed.

recently, but I liked what he played no matter what was going on around him. 3 stars. I've played Top 40 and r&b, and I'm trying to get something going now with a rap artist.

5 Don Cherry & Ed Blackwell

"Total Vibration" (from *MU #1*, Byg Records, 1969).

I've been listening to a lot of Don Cherry lately, with Ornette and that album with John Coltrane [*The Avant-Garde*]. I like his direction and his sound, very individualistic. That could be his pocket trumpet. The drummer? Could be Ed Blackwell; sounds like his time. 3. I like Don Cherry's conception, but I couldn't listen to that for another 15 minutes. I'd have to fast-forward on that . . . heh-heh.

6 Woody Shaw

"There Is No Greater Love" (from *SETTING STANDARDS*, Muse Records, 1983) Victor Jones, drums.

Woody, Woody. Yeah. Could be Carl Allen on drums; sounds like his cymbals. Naw, could be Victor Lewis. Woody's another cat, though, man, you hear one or two notes, you know it's him. I've been checking out a lot of him recently because he has a sideways way of playing that I've been trying to . . . that I listen to more and more. When I first started I was playing inside, but now I'm checking out cats who play sideways harmonically. Lester [Bowie] got me one night, said, "Hey, play somethin' diff'rent!" 4½. Woody gives me something new to think about every time I hear him. First time I heard him he was at Caravan of Dreams, on a radio show from Fort Worth, when I was about 17. Blew me away.

7 Roy Eldridge

"Roy's Riff" (from *DALE'S WAIL*, Verve, 1953) Oscar Peterson, organ.

I *loove* that. Definitely Roy Eldridge. The slickest thing about that is him with that organ, like a big band behind him. He had a very emotional way of building up every solo. He only had a minute, but that was all he needed! Definitely 5. DB