

BOBBY WATSON BLINDFOLDED

# DOWN BEAT

*Jazz, Blues & Beyond*

**Arturo  
Sandoval  
& Mario  
Bauza**

**Boxes of Ella**

**Paul Motian**

**Joshua Redman**

**Slide Hampton &  
The JazzMasters**

June 1993, \$2.50 U.K. £2.00 Can. \$3.25





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& MARIO BAUZA  
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by Larry Birnbaum.

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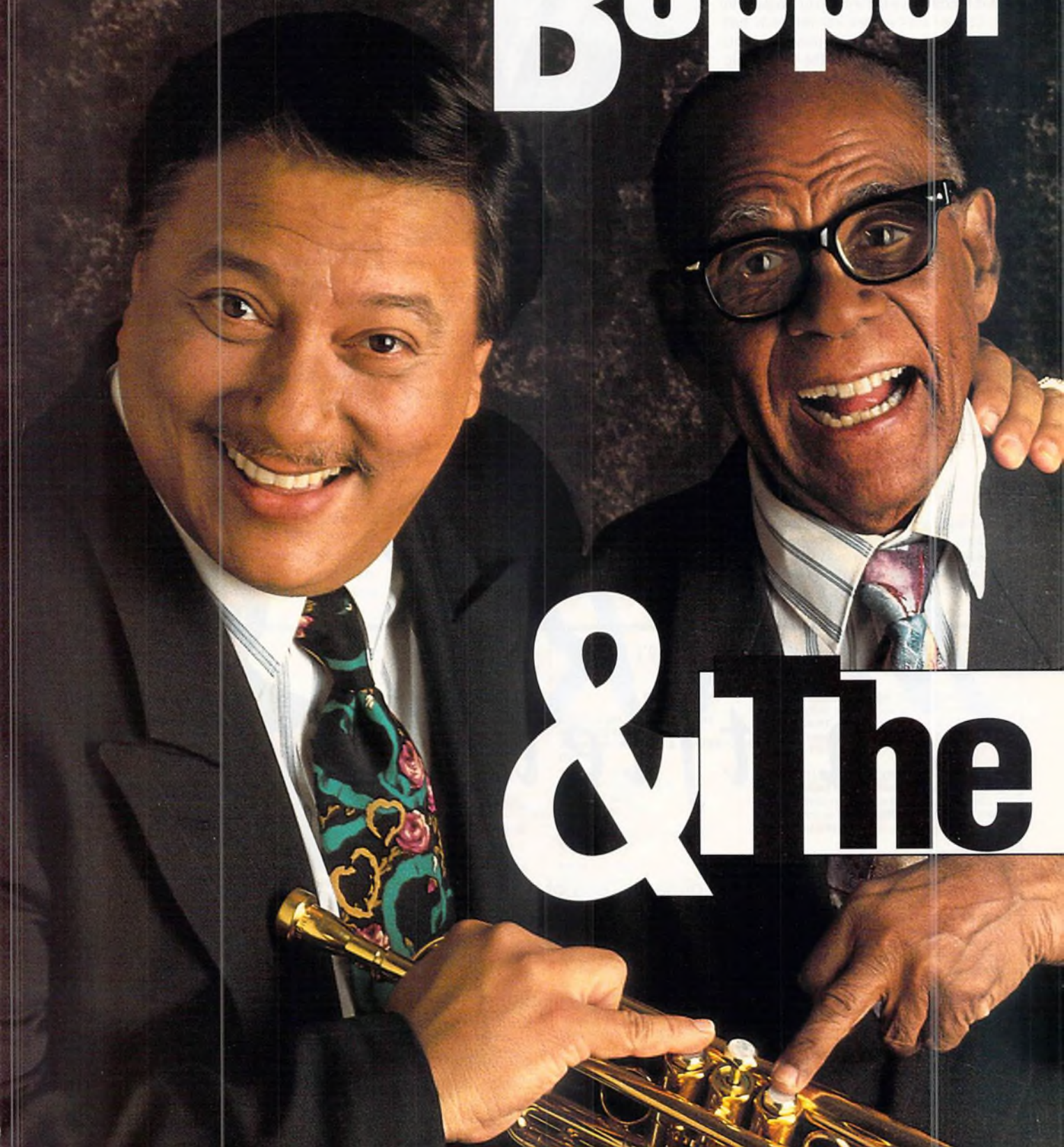
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# Cubano Bopper



& the

**T**his kind of reunion doesn't happen every day," says Mario Bauza, between generous helpings of shrimp with black beans and rice at Victor's Cafe 52 in midtown Manhattan, a mecca for New York's Cuban community. "We're having a beautiful luncheon, and the atmosphere is just right. And Victor just got through giving Arturo Sandoval and Mario Bauza two cigars from Cuba—free."

Strange as it might seem, Bauza, the 82-year-old patriarch of Afro-Cuban jazz, and Sandoval, the 43-year-old émigré trumpeter wizard, never heard of each other until Dizzy Gillespie visited Havana on a 1977 jazz cruise. Even in the U.S., Bauza was overshadowed by his brother-in-law Machito, whose mambo orchestra he directed for 35 years, while a U.S. embargo kept Sandoval and his records out of this country until a brief détente brought him to New York with the Cuban supergroup Irakere in 1978. (For more on Sandoval, see *DB* July '91.)

Bauza had known both Armando Romeu and his uncle Antonio Maria Romeu, who took Mario—then a teenaged clarinetist with the Havana Philharmonic—on his first trip to New York to record with his society band. Soon Bauza was back in the Big Apple, first as an alto saxophonist with Noble Sissle's orchestra and later as lead trumpeter and musical director of Chick Webb's big band, where he discovered Ella Fitzgerald. After brief stints with Don Redman and Fletcher Henderson, he joined Cab Calloway, bringing Gillespie into the band. Leaving Calloway in 1940 to help organize the Machito orchestra, he composed "Tanga," considered to be the first true Latin-jazz hybrid.

But it wasn't until after Machito's death in 1984 that Bauza's place in history began to be acknowledged. He formed his own big band and recorded with Machito's sister and former vocalist Graciela, but drew only a middling response until he gave an 80th birthday concert at New York's Symphony Space in 1991. German producer Götz Wörner was in the audience and signed Bauza to his Messidor label; the resulting album, with vocalist Rudy Calzado, featured a five-part suite based on "Tanga," arranged by Chico O'Farrill. The *Tanga* album won unanimous raves, and Bauza triumphantly toured the U.S. and Europe with his band; his new Messidor album, with Calzado and Graciela, is called *My Time Is Now*.

As for Sandoval, his latest release, *Dream Come True*, features an orchestra arranged and conducted by Michel Legrand. He's already looking ahead to his next project, a classical album with the London Symphony that will include his own trumpet concerto along with

His father brought him to New York, and I accompanied Paquito in New York and in Puerto Rico. Paquito was about 15 years old, played a little soprano. His father, Tito, was a good friend of mine in Cuba, from way back.

**LB:** So you already knew about Irakere.

**MB:** Oh, yeah. I'd been listening to the records. Bebo Valdez, the father of [Irakere pianist and leader] Chucho Valdez, was a good friend of mine. Bebo lives in Stockholm; he's another great musician. He used to be Armando Romeu's piano player at the Tropicana.

**LB:** But Arturo, you didn't know about Mario.

**AS:** Before I met Dizzy, no. They didn't play nobody's records who left Cuba. They said if they live in the States, they represent the enemy. And they used to say that jazz is the music of the imperialists. I met Mario through Dizzy, because Dizzy was the first guy to talk to me about him. Dizzy went to Cuba for the first time in 1977, and he told me about Mario then. The admiration and respect that Dizzy felt for Mario is something that just a few people know. Actually, he called him "Papa." He'd say, "This is my dad, in music and in life."

**MB:** Dizzy said to me, "I heard a trumpet player in Cuba I want you to meet." I said, "What are you talking about, Dizzy? Cuba doesn't produce good trumpet players." He said, "Mario, you never heard a trumpet player that's got so many octaves on the horn. I want you to hear this guy." So when Arturo came to New York, I went to the concert. Diz said, "What did I tell you?" And I said, "You're right. He's the greatest."

... I met Dizzy when he was with the Teddy Hill orchestra and I was with Chick Webb. He said, "Get me in your band," but Chick didn't want him. He was too progressive. So when I got in Cab Calloway's band I said, "Don't worry, I'm going to get you in there. I'm going to send you to the Cotton Club in my place. You've got to get there 15 minutes before the show, so they can't call nobody else. Just play your stuff easy, and don't overdo anything." When I got back, Cab said, "What happened to you?" I said, "Well, I had a cold. How's the man?" He said, "You know, he ain't bad." Dizzy was a hell of a man, but he was crazy. He was my roommate. I'd say, "Dizzy, please put the light out. Let's sleep, man. We've got five shows tomorrow." We used to do five, six shows a day in the theaters. Sometimes Calloway would call a rehearsal at six in the morning, and at a quarter to six he'd be sitting on the stage with a baton, waiting. Six o'clock—boom!

# Mambo King

By Larry Birnbaum

material by Hummel, Telemann, Vivaldi, and Leopold Mozart.

Lunching at Victor's, Bauza and Sandoval traded jibes and reminiscences over cups of steaming espresso.

**LARRY BIRNBAUM:** *When did you two meet?*

**MARIO BAUZA:** The first time Irakere came to New York. They played a concert in Carnegie Hall, and that's where I met him. And then they recorded for Columbia, and I went to the recording session.

**ARTURO SANDOVAL:** We met in July '78.

**MB:** The only guy in that band I knew before was Paquito D'Rivera.

**AS:** It's amazing how musicians complain about a job now, when we have to play three sets.

**MB:** We went on tour with the Mills Brothers—six shows every night for two weeks. The first show was at nine o'clock in the morning, and the last one was at midnight. You'd finish around two o'clock. I used to feel like I had nails in my chops. I said, first chance I get, I ain't going to play trumpet no more. Those were the good old days, though.

**AS:** Is that the advice you're giving me, that I should get away from the trumpet?

**MB:** That was when I was playing my old trumpet that I gave you.

You had to fix it.

**AS:** Oh yeah. We fixed it, and I played it and everything. They got it working.

**MB:** That trumpet is over 200 years old. It used to belong to Max Schlossberg.

**LB:** Who was he?

**AS:** Max Schlossberg was a classical trumpet player, one of the greatest ever. He wrote a wonderful book, too. Everybody practiced and learned from his book.

**MB:** And then they gave the trumpet to Toscanini's first-trumpet player. Then he gave it to his nephew, who played with the Chicago Symphony, and his nephew gave it to me. He said, "Mario, when you don't want it no more, return it to the family."

**AS:** And Mario gave it to me—to fix it, play it, keep it, and ruin it.

**LB:** Have you two ever played together?

**MB:** No.

**AS:** I played with your band here in New York, at the Village Gate.

**MB:** That's right. We played at Roseland, too.

**AS:** You forget, but I don't forget.

**MB:** I don't forget nothing. I remember, you played your head off. The people went crazy.

**AS:** Mario has been very busy lately. Mario, watch out, man. Don't work so hard. Take it a little easy. Look what happened to Dizzy.

**MB:** Dizzy used to make at least 40 weeks a year on the road.

**AS:** He was working too much. He never stopped.

**LB:** Arturo, did you hear jazz when you were growing up in Cuba?

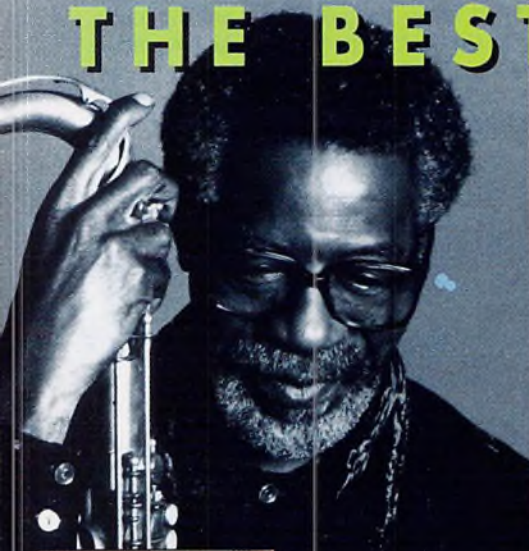
**AS:** When I was a kid, never. There was no way in Artemisa, my home town. Even now, the people there don't know about jazz. The



PHOTO: VIELZ

only thing I used to hear was traditional Cuban music, what we call *son*, which is played by a septet with a trumpet and bongos. But one day, a trumpet player there said, "Hey, you should listen to this." He had a Dizzy and Charlie Parker record from 1946, with Cozy Cole on drums, Milt Jackson on vibes, Slam Stewart on bass. Oh, man! I

THE BEST JAZZ IS PLAYED



**Joe Henderson**  
*So Near, So Far*  
(Musings for Miles)

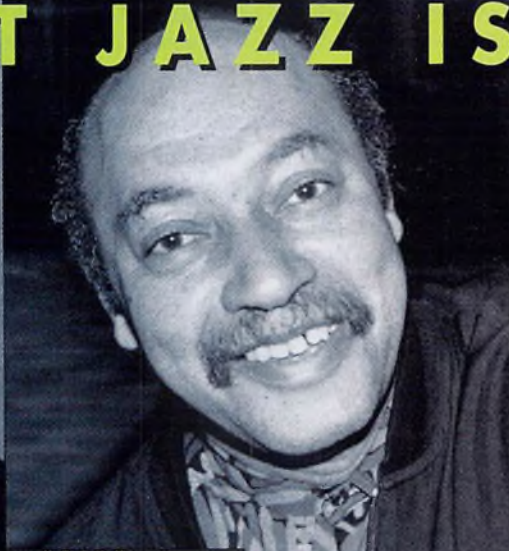
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— ROLLING STONE

★★★★★ — DOWN BEAT

314 517 674-2

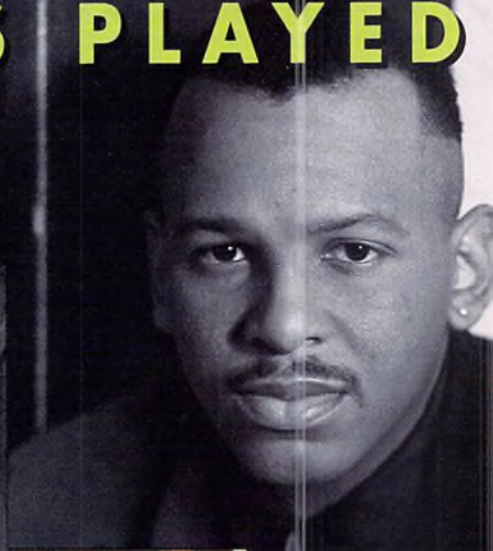


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*Sambao*

Spellbinding original tunes with a Brazilian flavor

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— DOWN BEAT

314 514 472-2



**Stephen Scott**  
*Aminah's Dream*

Featuring: Ron Carter, bass; Elvin Jones, drums

"...may be the finest mainstream player around... [Scott] reminds you of why you listen to jazz in the first place."  
— ROLLING STONE

314 517 996-2



HYOU VIELZ

said, "This is so weird. I don't understand nothing about what they're trying to play." But that changed my mind completely. And I'm still trying to find out what they were doing.

**MB:** You know how I met Charlie Parker? Norman Granz heard the Machito orchestra, and he said, "I want to record this band." So he brought Charlie Parker to the rehearsal. I said, "I ain't got no music

for you, because practically everything we play is with vocalists for people to dance." He said, "Never mind. Play whatever you got." So I played "Mango Mangue" by Gilberto Valdez, and he said, "I'll play that." I said, "But this is a vocal arrangement." He said, "All you've got to do is give me the cue and tell the singer I'm going to play." He went through the tune one time and said, "We're going to record that right now." I said, "This guy's a genius."

**AS:** No doubt about it.

**LB:** [to Arturo] *But you did play with Armando Romeu, one of the best jazz musicians in Cuba.*

**AS:** Armando, and Mario, too, and Ruben. I met all the brothers.

**MB:** I got Armando his first job at the Montmartre.

**AS:** Armando is still in Cuba, teaching. He's one of the most intelligent men I've met in my entire life. One time he talked to Frank Emilio, a very fine piano player in Cuba who's blind. He said, "Frank, why don't you play the Gershwin piano concerto in F?" Frank said, "I would like to, but it's very difficult to play it by ear." Armando said, "I'm going to write it for you in braille." And he learned the system in a matter of weeks and wrote the concerto in braille, just for him. He's an amazing musician.

**MB:** He's a good tenor player.

**AS:** He was a good saxophone player, but I never heard him play. When I met him he was just doing arrangements and conducting. I played with him at the Tropicana in the early '60s.

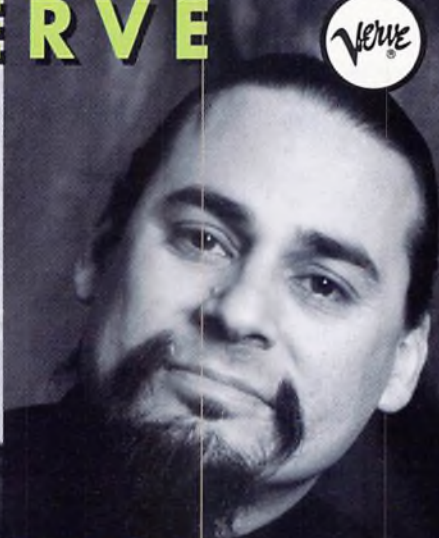
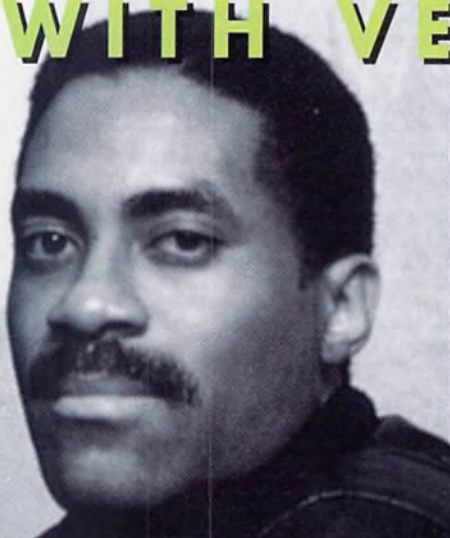
**MB:** His father was the conductor of the navy band, his brother Mario is a hell of a piano player, and his sister was a piano teacher.

**AS:** The best in the country—Zenaida. Chucho Valdez studied with her.

# WITH VERVE



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**Till We Have Faces**



**Steve Turre**  
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**Wolfgang Muthspiel**  
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Play whatever you got: (clockwise from lower right) Charlie Parker, Stan Getz, Machito, and Bauza at Birdland, early '50s.

**MB:** And his uncle, Antonio Maria Romeu, was the guy who I came here with.

**AS:** He had one of the best orchestras in Cuba.

**MB:** I came here to record with him in 1926.

**AS:** 1926? My mother was born in 1926.

**MB:** I went to Harlem and heard all those bands, and I fell in love with jazz. I couldn't stay because I was too young to get a passport. But when I turned 18 I came back here to live.

**LB:** And then Don Azpiazu recorded "The Peanut Vendor" with Antonio Machin singing and El Chino Lara on trumpet.

**MB:** That's how I came to play trumpet. When Lara went back to Cuba with Don Azpiazu, Machin was recording for Victor with a quartet, but he couldn't find no trumpet player here to play Cuban music. I told him, "If you buy me a trumpet, I'll play that stuff." He said, "Mario, you ain't no trumpet player." I said, "You buy me one and I'll play it." He said, "I've got to record in 15 days." I said, "That's all I need to get some chops." And then I fell in love with the trumpet. I wanted to be like Louis Armstrong; I knew all his solos. That's how I got into the Savoy with the Missourians, and that's where Chick Webb heard me. He taught me a whole lot of things, more than anybody. To me he was the best jazz leader in the country. He was a heck of a drummer, too. Krupa and Buddy Rich used to come to hear him. He came from Baltimore with a washboard; that was his drum.

**AS:** I feel embarrassed to talk after Mario, because he's part of the history, and he met all those people and was part of all those things. And I never met any of those great guys—only Dizzy. But when I came from Artemisa to go to music school, I met a clarinet player named Roberto Sanchez, and I asked him, "Who is a good trumpet player here in Havana?" And he said, "There's a guy you should know named Luis Escalante, because he plays everything well. He is the first-trumpet in the National Symphony Orchestra, he plays jazz, and he plays Cuban music." I never forgot that, and it has been my goal all my life to play as many things as I can. I don't want any sign on me that says "jazz" or "salsa" or "blues." I'm a musician, man.

**MB:** Musicians today don't think much about the public. Everybody tries to see how many notes they can play—but it's what you do with the notes. That's the thing they've got to learn. Arturo played "Body And Soul" one night at the Blue Note with Dizzy, and the things he did with that tune! The first time people heard "Body And Soul" is when Coleman Hawkins came from England and recorded it. He

was a poet of the saxophone. That man was something else—a guy with pace, a guy with swing, a guy with everything. He used to sit down and play piano.

**AS:** I read that Miles [Davis] came to Dizzy asking for lessons, and Dizzy said, "Learn some piano; and when you're familiar with the keyboard, come back." And now I recommend to all my students to learn some piano, because you understand the music a lot better. But Dizzy made me feel so embarrassed, because he asked me many times for lessons. I'd say, "Oh, Diz, please," and he'd say, "Come on, man." So I would give him some exercises and advice about embouchure and things, and he would come back and say, "You know, man, that worked." Nobody can give Dizzy advice about music, but he asked me about technique, because he didn't have any classical training. Number one, he didn't need it, and number two, he never had the chance. But it was incredible how he looked like a young kid trying to learn something, paying attention to everything you said.

**MB:** We lost a hell of a man, a hell of a musician, a hell of a human being. He had a full life, but we've got to face destiny sooner or later. Myself, I don't want to go, but if it comes, I've got to go. This morning I read in the paper that Billy Eckstine passed away, another one of my friends. When Dizzy first started, Billy was starting, and Miles Davis and Charlie Shavers. We were a bunch of kids trying to make it. We were all together, and every one of us found a way and made it, and left something for the young generation to talk and learn about. And I hope that this will be a great lesson to the young generation, and that they will try to create something. Create—don't copy no more—because they're copying the ones who already made it. Those people didn't get there by copying; they got there by creating. Everybody wants to be [John] Coltrane; but Coltrane was a creator. Don't try to be Coltrane; try to be yourself. Dizzy was Dizzy, and he made it. That's what I tell all the young generation. And that's good advice. DB

**EQUIPMENT**

"Every musician likes a different kind of horn," says Mario Bauza. who nowadays confines his onstage activity to conducting. "It depends what they want to produce. Like, for instance, me. I got a saxophone, and everybody wants to buy my saxophone. Just like it was with the trumpet. All the great lead-trumpet players used to say, 'Mario, let me try your horn.' I had a King trumpet. The factory made one especially for me, gold and gray, with silver. They stole it from the Savoy between sets. Everybody went after the horn. And the mouthpiece was made for me in Paris; somebody made it for me in gold and gave it to me. So they stole the horn with the mouthpiece, and I had a hell of a time to find another mouthpiece.

"So if you are looking for quality in tone, you've got to try a different make; if you just want to blow loud, it's something else. It all depends. My alto saxophone is Selmer. I had a soprano from Cuba, and I never touched another soprano that sounded like that. Somebody stole that, too. And somebody stole my clarinet here, too, a Buffet that I played in the symphony orchestra in Havana."

Says Arturo Sandoval: "I play the Shilke 'Arturo Sandoval' model trumpet, B-flat, and a Shilke model P4A piccolo trumpet, too, and a Holton 'Arturo Sandoval' model flugelhorn. The mouthpiece I've used all my life is a Bach 3C. Now I'm using a copy of a Bach 3C made by Dave Monette, and my flugelhorn mouthpiece is a Black & Hill."

"You don't find no reeds today," says Bauza. "You buy a case with 50 reeds, you get two good ones. But I use no more than a 2 1/2-to-3 reed. Soft reeds give a natural vibration, but you've got to know how to control your horn. The average jazz player, they don't learn no horn. They're self-made musicians. They're using their creativity, but you don't look to those guys for a good intonation. They don't go that way, just one in a million."

**SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY**

<p><b>Sandoval</b>  <i>DREAM COME TRUE</i>—GRP GRD-9701  <i>I REMEMBER CLIFFORD</i>—GRP GRD-9668  <i>FLIGHT TO FREEDOM</i>—GRP GRD-9634  <i>TUMBAITO</i>—Messidor 15974</p> <p><b>Bauza</b>  <i>MY TIME IS NOW</i>—Messidor 15824-2  <i>TANGA</i>—Messidor 15819-2</p>	<p><i>AFRO-CUBAN JAZZ</i>—Cairman CLP-9017  <b>with others</b>  <i>THE ORIGINAL MAMBO KINGS</i>—Verve 314                      513 876-2 (w/Machito, Dizzy Gillespie,                      Charlie Parker, Flip Phillips et al.)  <i>AFRO-CUBAN JAZZ MOODS</i>—Fantasy/                      OJC 447 (Dizzy Gillespie, Machito)</p>
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# What Becomes A Legend Most

ELLA FITZGERALD

By John McDonough



**H**ow would you feel about working with Ella on her autobiography?"

The question was tossed off by Norman Granz, longtime manager and producer to Ella Fitzgerald. On the receiving end, this writer had a question of his own: "Ella has never seemed especially analytical or introspective. How articulate is she about her music, her relationships, and herself?"

"Not at all," Granz replied. Both understood the problem. And there are still no plans for a Fitzgerald autobiography.

Personally, though, if I had the choice between a book or a record by Ella Fitzgerald, I'd prefer to listen. The life behind the work may be dramatic, or it may not be. But it would never preempt the work itself, which has become one of the most defining forces in American popular music performance. Not only has she recorded continually over seven decades, she has won numerous awards over that time span, from "Best Vocalist" in *Down Beat's* first Readers Poll in 1937 to her 12th Grammy in 1991 for *All That Jazz* (Pablo 2310-938). She was elected to *DB's* Hall of Fame in 1979's Readers Poll.

"I was around when she first hit the scene, and was struck by her feeling for the sheer musicality of a tune," says singer Bobby Short, who began his career in the late '30s. "She had a magnificent instrument from the beginning and a wonderful feel for jazz. I would say she was the most influential jazz-pop singer of her generation. And her longevity has given her an astounding cu-

mulative impact."

To affirm Short's observation, one has only to listen today to a contemporary singer such as Diane Schuur, whose new album of love songs on GRP (untitled at this writing) contains several tunes done by Fitzgerald. Although she cites Dinah Washington and Sarah Vaughan as her primary influences, Schuur credits Fitzgerald's instrumental approach to singing as having an important impact on her.

"How Ella fits in with me is basically the scat stuff," she says. "I learned a great deal from her on that, including how hard it is to do really well. Also, I think Ella sort of made it alright for singers to admit that they could be directly influenced by musicians as well as other singers. I don't know about Ella, but I certainly regard George Shearing and Stan Getz as major influences on my early years."

The work that has driven this influence is coming forth from the vaults with a vengeance in this year of Fitzgerald's 75th birthday. Both GRP and Verve have brought out birthday collections (see accompanying review). And Verve plans additional Fitzgerald reissues this year, including her two albums with Nelson Riddle (*Ella Swings Gently* and *Ella Swings Brightly*, both with bonus tracks), *The Complete Ella In Berlin Concert* (also with bonus tracks), and a deluxe 15- or 16-CD collection of Fitzgerald's eight songbook albums—a kind of Lincoln Memorial of American popular music. And NPR will air a tribute on July 4.

The reissues will help fill the gap created

by a much reduced concert schedule. In recent years, increasingly frequent hospitalizations have dogged her since undergoing heart surgery in August 1986. 1990 was to have been a busy year of about 30 concerts, including performances in Europe. But much of it had to be canceled before May. By '91 she limited herself to one or two performances a month at most. Audiences seemed amazed that such a slight lady—brittle as a China doll to the eye—could still command such a powerful sound. But last summer diabetes led to surgery to remove a toe, resulting in more cancellations. "Ella is not really ill, but not really well," says Mary Jane Outwater, chief of staff of Salle Productions (Ella's spelled backwards), which occupies the same small walkup office suite in Beverly Hills where Granz once ran his JATP/Clef jazz empire. Outwater, who has known Ella since she went to work for Granz in the early '50s, is courteous to questioners but protective of Fitzgerald's privacy. "That's all I can say," she says with a polite finality.

The singer's most recent concert was last December in Palm Beach, Fla. She was flown out on a private jet and performed sitting down. Fitzgerald planned no appearances in connection with her birthday, April 25. Although future concerts are under consideration, no contracts are being sent out as of spring, '93. Yet, sources close to her say Fitzgerald still has a great will to perform. Since the release of *All That Jazz*, Granz has recorded her with her regular trio plus trumpeter Harry Edison, but no release



date has been set. So the Fitzgerald saga continues, one day at a time.

To see Fitzgerald's craft in context, it may help to understand something about singing that is often ignored. It is that inside every singer there lives both an actor and a musician in some proportion. The actor works with character, drama, and illusion; the musician uses melody, harmony, and rhythm. All this intersects in the art of the singer and finds a balance. But every singer ultimately leans one way at the expense of the other. So it is the ratio of one to the other that finally defines a singer's most fundamental nature.

A singer/actor sees a song as a "role." Its lyric is the dialog and narrative. They inhabit its central character as Olivier might inhabit Lear. They magnify its emotions by making us believe it is their personal statement. The secret of artists from Al Jolson to Judy Garland and Billie Holiday to Frank Sinatra to almost any good rock or soul singer is their combined sense of theater and illusion. Musicianship is anything from a close second (Billie) to nonexistent (rock).

Singer/musicians, on the other hand, tackle a song more on instrumental terms. The drama of its lyric is less important than the abstraction of its melodic and harmonic logic. When words get in the way, they smear them around like twists of finger paint, or blow them off entirely in favor of wordless improvisation. Singers from Louis Armstrong to Mel Tormé to Sarah Vaughan to Bobby McFerrin make up a line of musicians who also happen to sing. And bestriding this lineage like the proverbial colossus is Ella Fitzgerald.



If her clear, youthful voice has been nature's gift to her art, the musicianship that drives it is all hers. She joined the Chick Webb band at 17 in 1935 and quickly made it her appendage. Decca saw to it that most of Webb's records featured her vocals. Today, they hold up only moderately well, interesting principally because of where they led. Her sound seems a bit nasal and adolescent. On some performances she sounds uncharacteristically rigid (on "Undecided," for example). And for every good tune she gets ("Don't Worry 'Bout Me"), there are a dozen pieces of trash ("Chew Your Bubble Gum"). If this was all there was, Ella Fitzgerald today would be a somewhat interesting footnote in jazz history.

After Webb's death in 1939, Decca promoted her as a single, and for the next 17 years she muddled along as a moderately successful pop singer who did what she was told and seldom got out of second gear. By the late '40s, though, there was another Ella emerging, one nurtured by Norman Granz. This Ella sang only the better songs. And in Granz' open-ended JATP concerts she had



The Decca Years: Ella, the pop songstress, fronting the remnants of Chick Webb's band

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the space and freedom to meet the finest musicians of her era outside the commercial bondage of Jack Kapp's hit factory at Decca. Fitzgerald had always had a knack for mimicking other singers. In the JATP concerts she began mimicking the musicians.

We should dwell on this a moment. Fitzgerald came of age in the '30s, at a time when jazz had moved to the center of popular music and brought with it the jazz musician's respect for craft and virtuosity. With swing and bebop, these values reached a peak of fulfillment in the work of Tatum, Eldridge, Goodman, Young, Christian, Hampton, Peterson, Parker, Gillespie, and many others. In targeting her mimicry on musicians like these, Fitzgerald trained her sights on some of the most extravagantly gifted virtuosos jazz has produced.

Singers had scatted before Fitzgerald. But the origins of Fitzgerald's vocal improvising are rooted primarily in instrumental models, not vocal ones. And particularly bebop instrumental modes. She coined an uncanny vocabulary of semi-verbal onomatopoeia that expressed the most subtle nuances of jazz improvisation. Coupled with an overdrive falsetto reserve, she met the finest musicians on their terms and dazzled audiences. In mimicking virtuosity, she came to possess it.

**W**hat is a great musician?" asks saxophonist Flip Phillips, who performed on many

*"What is a great musician?  
It's a person who can keep  
time. And Ella could keep the  
greatest time of anyone. That,  
more than anything, is what  
made her a musician in the  
eyes of other musicians."*

—Flip Phillips



JATP concerts with Fitzgerald. "It's a person who can keep time. And Ella could keep the greatest time of anyone. That, more than anything, is what made her a musician in the eyes of other musicians. A straight singer doesn't have to know time, just the lyric. But when you improvise, time is all you have. She had a musician's sense of time, and the ears to go with it. She could pick up on anything as well as any player. I could trade fours and eights with her as if she were another horn. A horn with a voice, that's what she was. And always in tune."



The Verve Years: Ella, the singer as musician, swinging the best of the American popular song

HERMAN LEONARD

**ELLA FOR BEGINNERS**

**D**ecca, which has treated its Ella Fitzgerald reissues much as it treated the lady herself during her years with the company, i.e., rather as a second-class citizen, has finally fessed up. On the heels of *The Early Years: Part 1* (see "Reviews" Feb. '93), GRP offers *75th Birthday Celebration* (Decca/GRP 2-619; 60:36/57:26:★★★), a birthday card that condenses her 1935 to '55 work into 39 tunes. The five pre-war Chick Webb sides are charming but thin. After '43 a more adult Ella was trotted through all kinds of mix-and-matchings that may have seemed like great ideas at the time but have worn poorly.

Dated vocal groups turn would-be gems like "Airmail Special" and "Lullaby Of Birdland" into so much cubic zirconia. Of interest are "Flying Home" and "Lady Be Good" with their early scatting, the first Ella/Louis Armstrong duets, and the overall growth of the voice from girlhood to maturity and the threshold of her greatest years.

*Ella Fitzgerald—The First Lady Of Song* (Verve 314 517 898; 65:43/68:58/64:22:★★★★★) picks up in 1956 and is magnificent in its sweep and excitement. As she comes exploding out of a 1949 JATP jam session (Norman Granz recorded her in concert, though he could not release anything), it's hard to tell who's doing more cheering, the crowd or the musicians. Her ballads are equally masterful. She never squeezes a lyric for emotion. Eschewing theatricality, she renders words with a transparent clarity and that lets them speak for themselves.

A few particulars: "Undecided" is absurdly rushed, though Armstrong's trumpet is in rare form, bursting at the seams. It makes his playing on the next cut, "Can't We Be Friends," sound feeble. "Cheek To Cheek" would have been a kinder cut. "Lady Be Good" from '57 is a brilliant magnum opus of scat. Yet, it would have been in no way redundant to include her "Lady" with Nelson Riddle, too. For Ella beginners, however, this is the mother lode. —J.M.

By the early '50s, Granz had assumed direction of her performing career. But Decca still ran her recording career, which was not on the whole distinguished. For 10 years she was partitioned between two sovereigns. Then, late in 1955, fate handed Granz powerful leverage. Decca, which had owned Universal Pictures since 1952, was anticipating with pleasure large profits from the soundtrack album of Universal's *The Benny Goodman Story*. Until, that is, Granz appeared and, with the assurance of a man about to checkmate an opponent's king, produced exclusive contracts with most of the film's star musicians. His price for their services on the Goodman soundtrack? A buy-out of Miss Fitzgerald's contract. Decca did not think long and readily surrendered.

A reunified Ella Fitzgerald promptly went to Granz' new Verve label. And there in the second week of February, 1956, she made the first of the masterpieces that would put her among the gods of song: *Ella Fitzgerald Sings The Cole Porter Song Book* (Verve 821 989 990). The other famous songbooks followed—Ellington, Gershwin, Berlin, Rodgers & Hart, et al. Then the Pablos in the '70s and '80s, with everyone from Count Basie to Andre Previn.

The Fitzgerald songbooks would become more than just albums. They would help change the way we think about our popular music. She showed that it was alright to take popular music seriously, that there was an almost classical essence inside it that could be given something approaching a definitive interpretation. She treated our grandest songwriters as composers; their music, as a canon. Some have said her style tends to favor the composer over the lyricist. Perhaps. But much of the reverence the so-called "American Popular Song" enjoys today is because Fitzgerald sang it in the way she did.

Although her mannerisms are familiar, her technique and sense of proportion have held them in balance. Fifty-eight years in the

big time have not come between Ella and the kind of artist she is. She never fell into self-caricature as, say, Billie Holiday did. Self-destruction brought forth the actor in Holiday as the musician in her crumbled. If the musician in Fitzgerald should ever fail, the actor in her could not pick up the slack. Few singers are as dependent upon pure musicianship as she is. Or have had such reserves of it. As with any musician, the manner of her work always supersedes the matter.

Unlike many other singers, Fitzgerald has never become an object of nostalgia. This is because she seldom attached herself to the cycles of fashion that nostalgia feeds on. For this the credit must go entirely to Norman Granz' extraordinary management. Surely no performer ever has had a wiser, more

discerning, or more courageous patron and protector. He has kept her on the high road for nearly 40 years and given her distance without isolation in the protected sanctuary of mainstream jazz. If she had self-doubts, she rarely embarrassed us with them by doing Cole Porter in disco or "Lady Be Good" in punk. Even on her most dreadful album, a piece of kitsch concocted by commercial producer Richard Perry in 1969, she is a thing somehow apart from the clatter going on around her.

In the end, her values have been as consistent as her musicianship. It hardly matters now that she no longer scouts seriously for new repertoire. Her core capital is blue chip and its value appreciates every year. **DB**

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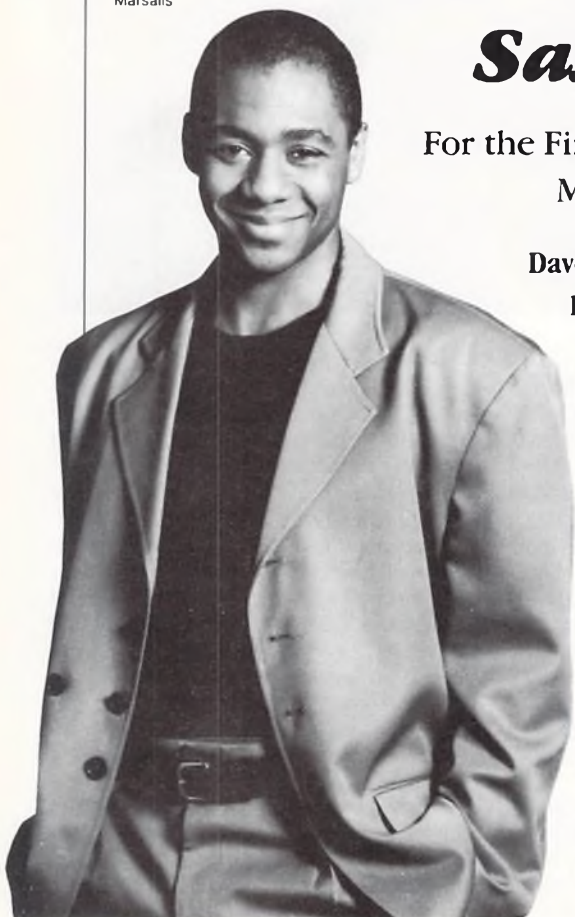
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# Believe The Hype

**JOSHUA REDMAN**

By Zan Stewart

**Y**ou're going to hear a lot from tenor saxophonist Joshua Redman.

In his scant two years on the jazz front, the 24-year-old has already perked up some big ears. He won the Thelonious Monk International Jazz Saxophone Competition in 1991. Appearances with father/saxophonist Dewey Redman, drummers Elvin Jones and Jack DeJohnette, bassist Charlie Haden's Liberation Orchestra, and his own ensembles have increased his visibility. Redman's impressive, self-titled debut album on Warner Bros. will no doubt result in more notice (see "Reviews" May '93).

Redman, an extraordinary young musician, deserves the recognition. Not since Wynton Marsalis' arrival on the jazz scene in the early 1980s has there been a new artist who has demonstrated parallel promise for artistic achievement and international renown. Veteran jazzmen sing his praises. "Joshua is beautiful," says bassist Charlie Haden, who has played and recorded with Redman in a small-group context. "He's very mature and very deep—way ahead for his age."

Joshua Redman, a native of Berkeley, California, almost didn't become a jazz musician. Though he heard the music early in life from the recordings of John Coltrane, Sonny Rollins, and Dewey Redman that his mother played, and eventually chose jazz as a career, academic excellence was his primary goal. "I wanted to make sure that even if I ended up in music, I would never be forced to do something that runs counter to my artistic instincts in order to put food on the table," Redman says. "Art is the extension of the soul, and the hardest thing for anybody to compromise is their soul. I never wanted to be in that position."

He achieved that goal. Valedictorian of his



BILL DOUTHART

graduating class at Berkeley High School in 1986, he attended Harvard on a full scholarship, majoring in social studies and graduating *summa cum laude* in June, '91, with a 3.87 g.p.a. He planned to attend law school at Yale. (He was also accepted at Harvard and Stanford.) But instead of beginning his studies immediately, he took a year's deferment and went to New York. At this point, he has no second thoughts about choosing the jazz life over the paper chase at Yale. "The whole thing about jazz and music that makes it great is it transcends language, it transcends the material world. It is something spiritual. It's a wonderful way to express yourself, to tell a story."

In New York, Redman, who is self-taught, worked at music for the first time in his life. "I have been playing since I was 11, but I never played everyday until I moved here," says the amiable, direct Redman—who lists his mother as his greatest artistic influence,

names Rollins as his No. 1 saxophone mentor, and points out that Coltrane, Stanley Turrentine, and Gene Ammons are also extremely important.

The saxophonist got a glimpse of the dedication required to be a jazz musician when he took his summers off from Harvard, where he played in a jazz band, and hung out with students from the Berklee College of Music. "It's a demanding and unrelenting discipline, as well as an incredibly moving and uplifting art form," he says now.

After Harvard, Redman lived in Brooklyn with saxophonist Mark Turner, a friend from Boston. Other musicians resided in the house, and Redman jammed continually, though he avoided practice routines, and still does. "I just play through tunes, improvise," says Redman, who now has his own home in that Eastern-most borough of New York City.

He was always this way—attuned to

music but eschewing formal training, adopting a personal approach—says his mother, Renee Shedroff, a former dancer and now a librarian in Berkeley. “Even as a baby, I noticed he would perk up to any kind of musical sound,” remembers Shedroff, who raised Joshua as single parent. (The elder Redman, who resided in New York, visited Joshua and his mother any time he was in the Bay Area.) “I’d take Joshua to gamelan concerts, and he’d come home and line up pots and pans and dishes in a sequence according to tone.”

The first solid payoff from Redman’s personal approach came at the Monk competition. There, in the finals, he played Jerry Valentine’s “Second Balcony Jump,” Monk’s “Evidence,” and Mal Waldron’s ballad, “Soul Eyes.” The judges—Benny Carter, Branford Marsalis, Jimmy Heath, Frank Wess, and Jackie McLean—selected Redman over such young yet seasoned performers as Tim Warfield and Chris Potter.

Winning led to a barrage of interest in Redman, as well as a check for \$10,000 from the Ford Motor Co. “It was awesome,” he says now. He was seen on CNN and was written up in the *Los Angeles Times* and other publications.

*“I wanted to make sure that even if I ended up in music, I would never be forced to do something that runs counter to my artistic instincts in order to put food on the table.”*



**A**fter the first wave of excitement was over, Redman says things became more “realistic.” “Just winning has nothing to do with music,” he says. “I think now when I get calls to do stuff, it’s because people have heard me play, and like it.”

Matt Pierson, head of jazz A&R for Warner Bros., liked Redman *before* the Monk event. At the competition, he was *knocked out*. “When Joshua got up, I just couldn’t believe it,” says Pierson, who produced *Joshua Redman*. “Like, immediately I

felt, ‘This is the guy!’”

Pierson signed Redman to Warners, giving the saxophonist a deal that calls for budgets of “substantially less than \$100,000 per album.” “The last thing a new artist needs is pressure to recoup a large budget, because, after all, the record company is just loaning the artist money against future royalties,” explains Pierson, referring to the signing figure.

During the recording of Redman’s album, Pierson acted as Redman’s advisor, asking questions that provoked the artist. “He was like a devil’s advocate, sometimes making counter arguments, then asking me what I thought,” the saxophonist notes. “He was an additional set of ears.”

The Pierson/Redman teaming has proven fortuitous, for *Joshua Redman* is an auspicious album. Performing on most tracks with his bravura working band—pianist Kevin Hays, bassist Christian McBride, and drummer Greg Hutchinson—Redman offers a series of invigorating, post-bop, modern-mainstream pieces.

The 11-tune set includes six finely crafted originals—from the tender-turned-gritty ballad “Wish” to the brooding-then-impromptu “Sublimation.” There are also jazz clas-

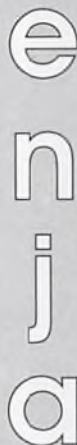


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sics—Monk's "Trinkle, Trinkle," Gillespie's "Salt Peanuts"—and standards such as "Body And Soul." James Brown's "I Got You" is tossed in, and treated with brio, not b.s.

Listening to the album, you're grabbed by Redman's sound. It's rich, weighty, and deep. And this fellow makes the music move, creating heat and interest, be it on a sultry blues or a come-hither ballad.

Redman stays busy. In January, he recorded a pair of albums for Criss Cross, one with up-and-coming pianist Mike LeDonne and the other with organist Mel Rhyne. He also appeared with Don Grolnick's band in Manhattan; the group featured Redman's favorite tenorman today—Joe Lovano. "He's a joy," says Redman, who is set to record on Lovano's next album in June. In March, Redman led his quartet, with Brian Blade in for Hutchinson, at the Village Vanguard.

This summer, Redman will go to Europe with Three Musicians, the band he co-leads with pianist Geoff Keezer and bassist McBride. In September, his second Warners album, featuring Pat Metheny, Charlie Haden, Billy Higgins, and trumpeter Nicholas Payton (see p. 15) will be issued.

Haden recalled the making of that album.

## EQUIPMENT

Until early this year, the only horn Joshua Redman played was an 86,000 series Selmer Mark VI tenor saxophone, which he has owned for more than a decade. But in February, he bought a Conn gold-plated tenor from New Jersey-based saxophone-mouthpiece specialist Bob Ackerman, who is known by his nickname, "The Mouthpiece Doctor."

Redman is ecstatic over his recent acquisition, which was manufactured in the late '20s and was once the horn of choice among jazz-tenor saxophonists. "It's the kind that Chu Berry played, that Pres [Lester Young] played," says Redman. "Joe Lovano, who also plays a Conn, hipped me to it. I'll never give up my Selmer, but the Conn has a great sound, while the Selmer has better action and intonation. Although I plan to play both, at some point, I hope to switch over to the Conn as my primary instrument."

Admitting he has gone through a lot of mouthpieces over the past year, Redman has settled on a metal Otto Link No. 9 mouthpiece, an older model that he estimates was made in the '70s. "It's the mouthpiece that I played on my Warner Bros. album," he says. As for reeds, he favors Vandoren Javas, in the green box, using either 2½s or 3s.

## DISCOGRAPHY

### as a leader

JOSHUA REDMAN—Warner Bros. 45242

### with various others

CHOICES—enja 7073 (Dewey Redman)

A LOOK INSIDE—Antilles 314 514 311 (Kenny Drew, Jr.)

YOUNGBLOOD—enja 7051 (Elvin Jones)

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NEW YORK STORIES—Blue Note 98959 (Danny Galfon, Bobby Watson et al.)

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FRIENDS OLD AND NEW—RCA Novus 63141 (John Hicks)

"He came across confident, very secure, meeting the challenge," says Haden. "He played these flowing lines like Fats Navarro, one after another, not repeating himself."

Redman points out that he has a life outside of music. He has a girlfriend, he likes to go to art museums, he likes to read—*Midnight's Children*, by Salman Rushdie, is his current novel—and he's a big fan of *Star Trek*.

Joshua Redman runs counter to so many stereotypes. He's self-taught, yet plays magnificently. He was reared by a single mother

who fought poverty-level conditions, he saw his father infrequently—yet somehow none of this mattered. He's become an accomplished young man who's clearly happy and well-adjusted.

"People hear my situation and wonder," he says. "I didn't have a father, we didn't have money; but that's all relative. I didn't have a lot of material goods, but I slept, I ate, I played, I was a kid. My mother loved me a lot. There are no bad feelings between myself and my father. I feel lucky, blessed. Life is good." DB

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# Masters, Young & Old

## THE JAZZMASTERS

By Suzanne McElfresh

**S**lide Hampton lives in a Manhattan apartment building called The Ellington, on a block dubbed Jelly Roll Walk that's near the stretch of 52nd Street named Swing Street—and nothing could be more appropriate.

As leader of the JazzMasters, a 12-piece orchestra formed last year by the late Dizzy Gillespie, Hampton's goal is to keep alive the innovative compositions of bebop's creators, those same artists who presided over 52nd Street when Hampton first moved to New York.

Lest this sound like a contradiction (a bebop repertory ensemble?), understand that the JazzMasters is by no means a ghost band. Instead, this aggregation upholds the very ideals set forth by Gillespie in his first big band, formed in 1945, ideals Hampton learned directly from his association with Gillespie, Art Blakey, Max Roach, and Barry Harris—masters who had once been his idols and then became his peers.

"The idea of that music was to stimulate your imagination to do something on your

own," says Hampton, who had played with Gillespie periodically since the '60s and was a member of his 1968 big band. "With the JazzMasters, we're not trying to reproduce the exact sound of Dizzy Gillespie's big band. But through his influence, we're writing new orchestrations on the compositions, while trying to bring out something from the time we're in."

The results of this melding were heard during a weeklong gig at the Village Vanguard in February, two nights of which were recorded by Telarc Records for the just-released *Dedicated To Diz*, an album of eight Gillespie compositions. The band will tour this summer in the U.S. and Europe, performing these pieces and others, and Hampton is already talking about the band's future projects. "We're working on Charlie Parker compositions as the next addition to our repertoire, and after that, Monk and Coltrane," with other band members, including saxophonist Jimmy Heath, trombonist Steve Turre, and pianist Danilo Perez, contributing arrangements.

As *Dedicated To Diz* reveals, the Vanguard performances were lively: the musicians were fired-up, the audience responded in kind, and the combination created a palpable buzz in the room. Listen to this ensemble, and it instantly becomes clear that this is a surprisingly unique big band. To begin with, there are Slide Hampton's arrangements, an exquisite study in the balance of innovation and tradition.

"There are a lot of intricacies involved in Slide's writing. He does the unexpected, harmonically and rhythmically, in his writing," says drummer Lewis Nash—whose recent album credits include his own *Rhythm Is My Business* (Evidence), Tommy Flanagan's *Beyond The Bluebird* (Timeless), Mulgrew Miller's *Hand In Hand* (Novus), and *Legends*, with Benny Carter, Doc Cheatham, and Hank Jones (MusicMasters). "You can't play it by ear," Nash states. "You just have to read it and trust that it's right. But Slide's writing is so musical, the difficulty factor is negated. The different parts fit together; then, when you hear it with the band, you know it's right."

**C**ertainly, Hampton's genius is in the details, as can be heard on the album's "Overture," a medley of five Gillespie compositions. The arrangement features brass and woodwind lines winding around each other as the orchestration shifts from the sustained chords of "Con Alma" to the *bap* and *pow* of "Ow!" and "Bebop," returns to the long tones of "I Waited For You," and then slides with a shout into "Blue 'n' Boogie," the anchor of the piece. From there on in, the band swings and bops—with background riffs exclaiming behind soloists—to the climactic end.

"Slide has a gift," says tenor saxophonist David Sanchez, who can be heard on Danilo Perez's self-titled Novus release, Kenny Drew Jr.'s *A Look Inside* (Antilles), Charlie Sepulveda's *Algo Nuestro* (Antilles) and Dizzy's *To Bird With Love* (Telarc). "Some of these songs have been arranged many times before, but Slide put something different in them, using classical-music influences and certain compositional techniques to create different sounds and different colors. He has an incredible imagination."

"He would have us playing the melody, but he would add a touch—a pause or a trumpet break," says Roy Hargrove, who has four albums as a leader, including the just-released *Of Kindred Souls* (Novus), and can be heard on Jackie McLean's *Rhythm Of The Earth* (Antilles) and a forthcoming Diana

Ross release (Motown). "One trumpet break was something I had heard before on a Dizzy Gillespie big-band record; but Slide had us playing it up a fifth, and Jon Faddis was playing it an octave above *that*."

For saxophonist Jimmy Heath, a featured member of the JazzMasters and a veteran of many big bands, the arranging style is very familiar. He first played one of Hampton's arrangements in Maynard Ferguson's band in 1959.

"Slide is a unique orchestrator. It's a 12-piece band, but Slide makes it sound like 16

*"Slide's a very adventurous orchestrator—his voicings are very modern-sounding, yet he keeps the tradition of swing. So there may be dissonance, but there's always a groove. As Dizzy used to say: You've got to have one foot in the past and one foot in the future."—Jimmy Heath*



or 18 pieces," says Heath. "He's a very adventurous orchestrator—his voicings are very modern-sounding, yet he keeps the tradition of swing. So there may be dissonance, but there's always a groove. As Dizzy used to say: You've got to have one foot in the past and one foot in the future."

In fact, that very principle was the catalyst for the formation of the JazzMasters. "Dizzy had the idea of preparing a core group of musicians to continue his music in his spirit," says Charles Fishman, Gillespie's former manager and producer.

First, Gillespie formed the United Nation Orchestra in 1988. Under the direction of Paquito D'Rivera, this band continues to perform, focusing on Dizzy's Afro-Caribbean, Latin, and Brazilian compositions. Last year, Gillespie put together another ensemble to play bebop and straight-ahead compositions. This nine-piece band, with Hampton as the musical director, embarked on the '92 "To Diz With Love" tour of the U.S. and Europe. The band continued the tour even after Dizzy became ill and was

unable to perform.

With the addition of a few more musicians, the ensemble became the JazzMasters. Hampton, an adjunct professor at Queens College, also teaches student jazz clinics (and has done so with the JazzMasters), and is a member of John Gordon's Trombones Unlimited, a sextet with three trombones (Gordon, Hampton, and Josh Roseman) and a rhythm section, whose self-titled album was released last year.

"The influence of Dizzy is very strong," Hampton says of the band. "When I was writing the arrangements, I was thinking about Dizzy's band, which came out of Billy Eckstine's band, which came out of Earl Hines' band. They wrote music in order to have a positive effect on the audience, in an emotional way, a spiritual way."

As Heath says, "With this band, we're continuing a tradition that we believe is very important to the African-American tradition, a tradition that came out of Fletcher Henderson, Count Basie, Duke Ellington."

Heath performs with his own big band today, while also leading his own quartet, leading a student big band as an adjunct professor at Queens College, and conducting student jazz clinics. Heath's first job out of high school was in Nat Towles' big band, a Midwest territory band. In 1947, at the age of 21, he led his own big band in hometown Philadelphia, hiring John Coltrane, Benny Golson, and Johnny Coles.

Then, in 1949, Heath joined Dizzy's second big band. Looking back, he notes some differences between that band and the JazzMasters. "This band has more talented soloists than Dizzy's band did," he remembers. "In Dizzy's band, he was the primary soloist, and Paul Gonsalves was the soloist in the saxophone section. Coltrane and I were playing alto, and we got a few solos, but not many. In the JazzMasters, all the musicians are great interpreters of the music and great soloists, and Slide leaves a lot of open spaces in the arrangement to allow them to speak their piece."

**O**nstage at the Vanguard, trumpeter Claudio Roditi is soloing. David Sanchez rises, thinking Roditi is nearly finished. But, in the excitement of the moment, Roditi continues to play, with Sanchez still standing, holding his tenor, waiting to play. After another 16 bars, Jimmy Heath looks at Sanchez and, grinning, gets up from his chair. "Okay!" he says, laughing. "We'll all stand!"

The mix of younger and older band members is another way the band keeps one foot in the past and one in the future. Among the youngest players are the 24-year-old pianist Danilo Perez (see "Riffs" May '93), trumpeter Hargrove (also 24), and saxophonists Sanchez and Antonio Hart (both 24), while

The JazzMasters: (front, l-r) Jimmy Heath, Slide Hampton; (middle row) George Mraz, Jon Faddis, Douglas Purviance, Claudio Roditi, Steve Turre, Lewis Nash; (back row) David Sanchez, Roy Hargrove, Antonio Hart, Danilo Perez.





Slide Hampton

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Heath, 66, and Hampton, 60, are the elder statesmen. In between are Nash, bass trombonist/tubaist Douglas Purviance, and trumpeter Jon Faddis, all in their 30s, and forty-somethings Roditi, trombonist Steve Turre, and bassist George Mraz.

"All the great musicians got a lot of development and training in the big bands," Hampton points out. "Louis Armstrong, Coleman Hawkins, Lester Young, Dizzy—you had to learn because you were there next to guys that played better than you."

Hargrove played onstage with Gillespie several times, including a week out of the monthlong 75th birthday celebration at New York's Blue Note nightclub last year. For the experienced-but-still-young musician, the lessons came onstage ("Dizzy's harmonic concept was something I was really checking out. I was listening to every nuance") as well as off ("Dizzy had a beautiful spirit. He inspired us cats playing with him to make music").

Nash, too, found much to listen to, even backstage, after the gig. He also played with Gillespie during his weeklong 75th-birthday celebration, resulting in the live recording *To Bird With Love* for Telarc. "It was an honor to be around Dizzy and the other older musicians that I respect, like Jimmy and Slide," he says. "And then to see the amount of respect and admiration they had for Dizzy—it was a high. It heightened my respect for him even more. One night, Milt Jackson was there, and all these guys were backstage, talking about Dizzy and what a great teacher he was to all of them, how he would sit down at the piano and show them stuff."

For Sanchez, the education continues, even now that Dizzy's gone. "It's a great experience," he says of the JazzMasters. "In rehearsing and playing with these older musicians and just being around them, I'm listening and learning. But you also feel like you're a part of it, in the way they work with you. They're great musicians and great teachers, they're the masters—but you're one of them."

Among the veterans in the band, the feeling is mutual. "These young guys have a vast amount of ideas in their solos," Hampton says. "They think of things you wouldn't ordinarily think of in their approach to harmony and melodic material."

In the saxophone section, Heath sits alongside two young lions—Sanchez and altoist Antonio Hart—players Heath admires for their dedication to and knowledge of jazz. "We get satisfaction in hearing someone who's going to carry on our tradition," Heath says. "I'm sitting next to Antonio Hart, who is one of my students at Queens College, and David Sanchez, who, while being one of the most expressive musicians coming out of the Latin tradition,

also has a great knowledge of the American jazz tradition. They practice all the time and are listening all the time. Seeing that, sitting next to them on the bandstand, my face is just lit up like a floodlight!"

The respect starts at the top, with Hampton expressing boundless praise for each and every member of the band. He values each musician's contribution to the band, and makes sure each musician knows it. "We want the musicians to realize how what we're doing is greatly affected by them as individuals," Hampton says. "So when they go onstage, they feel like they're really part of this. In our band, everybody gets to play, and what they play is important. And we want them to feel their importance."

Nash says that approach makes a difference, noting that "there are no low points in this band. It's intense all the time. Everyone is listening to everything at every moment, musicians are shouting out encouragement

for the soloists—it's all heartfelt. Everyone has a respect for the music and a desire to perform at a very high level, all the time. Everyone is learning and contributing at the same time. And also, having fun." **DB**

### HEATH AND HAMPTON EQUIPMENT

Jimmy Heath plays Selmer tenor and soprano saxophones, with a Meyer hard-rubber #6 mouthpiece on the tenor and a Selmer D mouthpiece on

the soprano. He uses Marca reeds. Slide Hampton plays a Bach Model 12 trombone, with a custom-made mouthpiece.

### HEATH AND HAMPTON SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

PEER PLEASURE—Landmark 1514 (Jimmy Heath)

NEW PICTURE—Landmark 1506 (Heath)

JIMMY—Muse 5138 (Heath)

LITTLE MAN, BIG BAND—Verve 314 513 956 (Jimmy Heath Big Band)

LIVE IN CONCERT—Mons 1890 (Slide Hampton w/Trombones Unlimited)

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# Shaved Head, Will Travel

**PAUL MOTIAN**

By K. Leander Williams

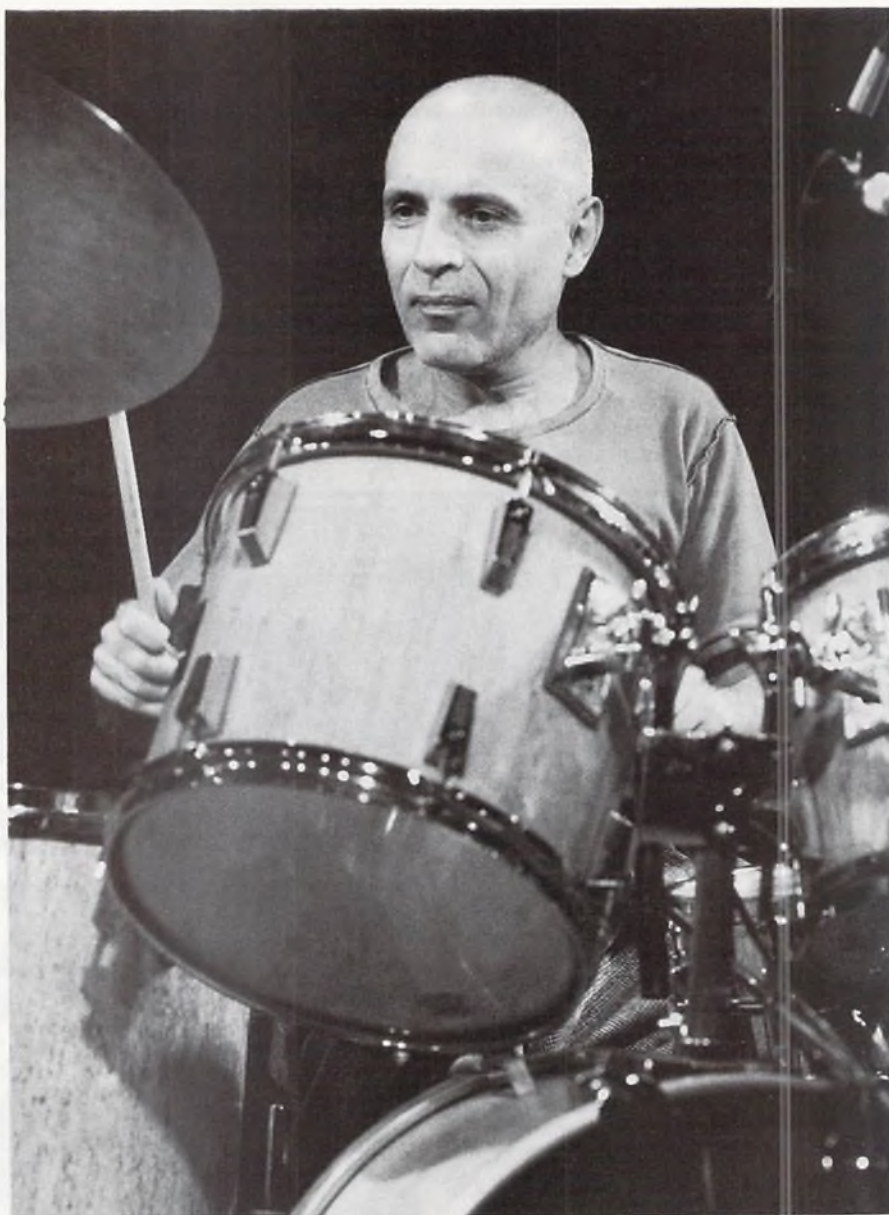
**D**rummer Paul Motian sits across the table in an Upper West Side apartment. Once the hood he's wearing as protection from the New York cold is removed, his shaven face and head give him a blazing, streamlined appearance—stern and authoritative, like a world-class swimmer or speed skater on a mission with posterity. The head doesn't move or jostle as he speaks, and the words come out with a casualness and profusion that surprise me, considering his well-noted reluctance to interviews.

Just the day before, an amazed Brad Schoeppach, one of the young guitarists in the drummer's new Electric Bebop Band, told me, Motian "never says yes to those things." So I asked Motian why, and candidly, he explained: "Well, since I'm still making recordings, I know sometimes they're good to do. But frankly, man, much of the time [interviews] take more out of me than anything else. I'm past the point in my life and career where I want, or even need, more work or publicity. Right now, I'm doing more than enough of what I want to do, and have all the opportunities to play as much as I want to play. Like, I no longer need to do club dates to make a living. And besides that, man, I'm gonna be 62 years old. What am I, a new star, or something?"

No, Paul, just an eternally rising one.

"Right now, I'm completely happy with what's happenin'," Motian continued. "As a matter of fact, man, it's funny . . . when I hit 50 I thought I'd reached a peak, that it couldn't possibly get any better than it was right then. And then I got to 60, and as it turns out, things got better. I'm playing more and recording more now than I ever did in my life."

Since it is with just such simple graces that the mundane often rights itself, I wondered aloud about his name. Motian laughed



HYOU VIELZ

at my train of thought. "People called me 'motion' going back as far as kindergarten." There may not be a more poetically appropriate name in all of jazz, but apparently Motian felt he had to grow into it. He was born Stephen Paul Motian (MOH-Tee-En) to Armenian immigrants in Providence, Rhode Island, and didn't affect a change until 1976, when he led his first group.

Motian's credits read like a popular history of post-bop jazz: the classic Bill Evans Trio with Scott LaFaro, Paul Bley, Charles Lloyd, the Liberation Music Orchestra, Carla Bley, the Jazz Composer's Guild, and the immensely popular Keith Jarrett trio and then quartet; you name it, he was there balancing time on its edge with a cleverly placed brushstroke and the now-charac-

teristic hum of his ride cymbal.

To say that he is busy is something of an understatement. He'd finished a new date with Paul Bley just the week before—"a treat" because it was his first encounter with Bley together with electric bassist Steve Swallow. Something with Italian pianist Enrico Pieranunzi preceded that, he's going to Europe for a week with guitarist Wolfgang Muthspiel, and he's recently minted the Electric Bebop Band's debut session (the group contains former Jarrett colleague Dewey Redman's son, Joshua). The band embarks on a five-week tour of Europe in a couple of weeks.

However, the key word to remember with Motian is subtlety. The reputation for breathtaking precision he began cultivating

shortly after his Navy discharge in 1954 has kept him in constant demand. Paul Bley has remarked on occasion that drummers didn't contribute much to Bley's particular improvisational frameworks until they "stopped keeping time."

For Motian, time has become a peculiarly expandable commodity. Although he worked with explorers like Oscar Pettiford and Lennie Tristano in the mid-to-late '50s, the drummer attributes this rhythmic elasticity to Evans and LaFaro. "It was a combination of the music we were playing, and the people playing it," he says. "I mean, I was listening to an old Tony Scott record I'm on from just before that period with Bill, Henry Grimes, Jimmy Knepper, Sahib Shihab, and a whole lot of other cats; and I'm playing straight-ahead  $\frac{3}{4}$ , man, not breaking up the time hardly at all. And then, playing with Bill, when Scott started gigging with us . . . because they weren't doing strict time anymore, I just took what I heard these two guys doing, and all of a sudden the time started to spread out more, and it became a little freer."

**S**amples of this elusive fabric can be heard on Motian's current release, the third volume in the highly successful *Paul Motian On Broadway* series. It is in the drummer's astonishing gift for lyrical conversation—discourse, as opposed to pedantry; suggestion, rather than statement. Not unlike the Electric Bebop Band, where bop tunes are given a delicate aural facelift, Motian's longer-standing trio of Bill Frisell and Joe Lovano is augmented by Charlie Haden and Lee Konitz in yet another landmark session that astutely transforms the past into present and future. (Konitz is an especially haunting presence, as his dry, vibrato-less intensity harks back to Motian's tenure with Tristano. "None of that stuff with Lee was ever recorded," adds Motian. "We did record a live date once for Verve with Bill, Warne Marsh, and Jimmy Garrison, but the guy who got hold of the tapes faded out everything except Warne's solos when he put it out.")

"It's always nice to find a new road, something that kinda changes things up a little bit," Motian confesses. "For *Broadway*, I did a lot of research on the tunes, selecting the ones I felt a closeness to, the songs I liked, and I tried to separate the different Broadway composers of the different eras—basically the '20s and '30s. Some of the changes we used, like 'What Is This Thing Called Love' [Vol. I] and 'How Deep Is The Ocean' [Vol. III], were actually Bill Evans' changes."

While it's probably a safe guess that working with several generations of master keyboard players—most recently Geri Allen—has grounded him firmly inside the

tradition, things like the *Broadway* series allow Motian to remain close to pristinely trenchant melodies even while integrating electric-guitar players into his work. Unsurprisingly, early gigging with Thelonious Monk in particular ("the angularity of his tunes is great fun for drummers") left a stamp on Motian's work that resurfaced in kind some six years ago. "The cat at JMT

*"Right now, I'm doing more than enough of what I want to do. Like, I no longer need to do club dates to make a living. And besides that, man, I'm gonna be 62 years old. What am I, a new star, or something?"*



heard the trio on tour and dug the idea of Monk with such offbeat instrumentation," he explains. Although Motian already had done several Monk compositions over a span of fascinating dates for Soul Note, the crowning achievement, 1988's *Monk In Motian*, began his fruitful relationship with JMT.

"It seems to me, man, that these things are almost circular. Sometimes I wonder to myself, 'Am I going back to an earlier period of just playing more time?' And I know I am, sort of. But meanwhile there's all the experience and all the years in between. On some mysterious level, all the different kinds of

playing are somehow incorporated in what I'm doing right now. It's in me, so it's gotta be there. And since it's there, it's kind of better, in a way. I think for me, playin' time is better now than it was 30 years ago; 'cause, if you think about it, now there's so much more 'time to play.'"

When asked about the new bebop project, Motian warms up visibly. "I've always wanted to go back and play bebop," he begins. "That's what I came up with. So naturally, I lean more toward acoustic music than electric. But I've had Bill Frisell with me since 1980, and it's worked out so nicely that I wanted to do more with electric instruments to maybe turn younger kids on to bebop." In addition to Schoepach and Redman, the supple electric quintet employs another young guitar player in Kurt Rosenwinkle, electric bassist Tsutomu Takeishi, and Red Rodney sideman Chris Potter when Redman is involved in other projects. Motian insists on playing the tunes straight. "The idea is not to alter the music in any significant way, just to use a different type of lineup."

Motian has a history of handpicking remarkable young talent. When he selected Frisell and Lovano 13 years ago, outside the coterie of their respective scenes, both were relative unknowns. "Now both have got their careers going quite successfully," he says with obvious pride. Although Motian doesn't formally teach ("I'm still learning myself," he admits), it's probably not at all fortuitous that he seeks out musicians he feels can enhance his conception and benefit from the time spent with him.

And Motian's well aware that he's part of a grand tradition. "I've always admired Art Blakey and what he did. All the bands he had, all the people that went through his bands—it was just great. If I can do anything close, or even comparable, to what he did, I'll be very, very happy." **DB**

## EQUIPMENT

Paul Motian has two drumsets. One's a 20-year-old Slingerland set he says he bought one piece at a time. It contains an 18-inch bass drum mounted with two tom-toms (9 x 13 and 10 x 14), a 16 x 16 floor tom, and a 5 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 14 Original SL Metal Snare ("it might be one of the first ever made"). The second set is a Gretsch Maplewood with a 20-inch bass drum, and two tom-toms (14 x 15 and 14 x 16). He has a choice between two wood

snare, a Gretsch ("it's a little deeper") and a Solid. For cymbals, Motian uses a 14-inch hi-hat with a Zildjian bottom and a Paiste top, a 20-inch A Zildjian with rivets ("it's 40 years old . . . easily"), and a 22-inch Paiste Dark Ride Cymbal. On occasion, he employs a Chinese cymbal.

As for sticks, Motian uses Drummer's World MW-1's exclusively, and only wood tip 3As.

## SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

(See **DB** May '86 for a listing of earlier titles)

**as a leader**  
*ON BROADWAY, VOL. III*—JMT 849 157  
*MOTIAN IN TOKYO*—JMT 849 154  
*ON BROADWAY, VOL. II*—JMT 834 440  
*ON BROADWAY, VOL. I*—JMT 834 430  
*MONK IN MOTIAN*—JMT 834 421  
*ONE TIME OUT*—Soul Note 121224  
*MISTERIOSO*—Soul Note 121174

**with Paul Bley**  
*MEMOIRS*—Soul Note 121240 (w/ Charlie Haden)

*NOTES*—Soul Note 121190  
*WITH GARY PEACOCK*—ECM 843 162  
**with various others**  
*DREAM KEEPER*—DIW/Blue Note 795474 (Charlie Haden's Liberation Music Orch.)  
*ETUDES*—Soul Note 121162 (Haden, Geri Allen)  
*IN THE YEAR OF THE DRAGON*—JMT 834 428 (Haden, Allen)  
*VILLAGE RHYTHM*—Soul Note 121182 (Joe Lovano)  
*DISCOVERY*—Blue Note 795478 (Gonzalo Rubalcaba)

# Key

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



## Jane Ira Bloom

**ART AND AVIATION**—Arabesque Jazz AJ0107: *GATEWAY TO PROGRESS; FURTHER INTO THE NIGHT; HAWKINS' PARALLEL UNIVERSE; STRAIGHT NO CHASER/MIRO; OSHUMARE; ART & AVIATION; MOST DISTANT GALAXY; I BELIEVE ANITA; LOST IN THE STARS.* (58:07)

**Personnel:** Bloom, soprano sax, live electronics; Kenny Wheeler, flugelhorn, trumpet; Ron Horton, trumpet (2-4); Kenny Werner, piano; Rufus Reid, bass (2,4,5,7); Michael Formanek, bass (1,3,6,8); Jerry Granelli, drums, elektro-acoustic percussion.

★ ★ ★ ★ 1/2

*Art And Aviation* grabbed me for a number of reasons, the remarkable Kenny Wheeler for one. His bold, quicksilver statements on the swinging opener, "Gateway To Progress," and the jaunty, New Orleans-tinged "I Believe Anita" (for Anita Hill) are highlights. His exchanges with Jane on the haunting modal piece "Further Into The Night" border on the telepathic. His probing trumpet solo on "Oshumare" follows the contour of that Zen-delicate piece, while he responds with an appropriate edge on the tense Ornette-ish title track.

The rhythm section interplay throughout is excellent. Bassists Reid and Formanek make their formidable tones and flawlessness felt on every track, freeing up Granelli to dance loosely on his kit. An unsung drum hero in the States, Granelli underscores the proceedings with a graceful touch and an open mind, coloring with mallets, brushes, and cymbals while also subtly blending in electronic effects, as on "Gateway To Progress" and Monk's "Straight No Chaser." Bloom makes creative use of electronics herself on the title track and on "Most Distant Galaxy," her mournful tribute to the crew of the space shuttle Discovery. Bloom and Ron Horton sound like soulmates navigating the slithering, angular lines of "Hawkins' Parallel Universe," based on the

changes to "Body And Soul." The album closes on a poignant note with Jane's heartfelt dedication to the late Ed Blackwell, an unaccompanied "Lost In The Stars."

An intelligent and passionate improviser, Jane Ira Bloom transcends virtuosic chops and the stigma generally associated with electric jazz on her Arabesque debut. —*Bill Milkowski*



## Manhattan New Music Project

**MOOD SWING**—Soul Note 121207-2: *VAMP'S DANCE I; THE QUEEN OF DIN'S NEW RELIGION; DEPRESSIONS OF EASTERN EUROPE; ZOROOT AND GORT GO FISHING; HOPPY DAZE ARE HERE AGAIN; MOOD SWING; SHADOW; SHOVEL MAN; GRADUATION MARCH OF THE CRASH TEST DUMMIES; JOHN CAGE; THAT LEAN AND HUNGRY LOOK; I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TIME IT WAS; SYNCHRONICITY; VAMP'S DANCE II.* (76:32)

**Personnel:** Jack Walrath, trumpet, flugelhorn; Tom Varner, french horn; David Taylor, bass trombone, tuba; Ron Tooly, trumpet; Bruce Williamson, alto sax, flute, clarinet, bass clarinet; Chuck Clark, soprano, tenor saxes, flute; Tim Reis, baritone sax; Jon Kass, violin; John Ladd, viola; Mary Wooten, cello; Neal Kirkwood, piano; Paul Nash, acoustic, electric guitars; Jeffrey Carney, bass; Jamey Haddad, drums, percussion.

★ ★ ★

Composers like Paul Nash, David Taylor, and Jack Walrath, who cogently work within the jazz idiom, but who also find inspiration in post-serial strategies, have found a commodious abode in the Manhattan New Music Project. Often, their work for the MNMP contains glimmers of Gil Evanish color, streaks of Mingus-like volatility, and flashes of Third Stream smarts. Elsewhere, they employ the rhythmic patterns patented by minimalists and even the aleatory methods of John Cage. As a result, the aptly titled *Mood Swing* is a heady mixed bag.

Generally, the larger the canvas MNMP has to work with, the better. Most of the several pieces that clock in under two minutes are no more than clever. Longer pieces like Walrath's "Depressions Of Eastern Europe," which deftly attenuates the emotional connotations of a rhapsodic theme, and Nash's "Synchronicity," a bracing collage of jazz, classical, and genre-blending materials, are better statements of the MNMP's mission.

The MNMP also has its lighter, no less noteworthy moments, like Nash's "March Of The Crash Test Dummies," a cabaret-flavored theme that borders on Breukeish debauchery, and Chuck Clark's sumptuous flamenco-hued arrangement of "I Didn't Know What Time It Was." —*Bill Shoemaker*



## Lovano/Cox/Blackwell

**SOUNDS OF JOY**—enja 70113-2: *SOUNDS OF JOY; STRENGTH AND COURAGE; I'LL WAIT AND PRAY; CEDAR AVENUE BLUES; BASS SPACE; ETENRO; UNTIL THE MOMENT WAS NOW; THIS ONE'S FOR LACY; 23RD STREET THEME.* (60:31)

**Personnel:** Joe Lovano, tenor, alto, soprano saxes, alto clarinet; Anthony Cox, bass; Ed Blackwell, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

## Joe Lovano

**UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE**—Blue Note CDP 7 99830 2: *LUNA PARK; SCULPTURE; JOZIE & ROSIE; THIS IS ALWAYS; WORSHIP; CLEVELAND CIRCLE; THE DAWN OF TIME; LOST NATIONS; HYPNOSIS; CHELSEA RENDEVOUS.* (63:59)

**Personnel:** Lovano, tenor, soprano, alto saxes, alto clarinet, wood flute, gongs, percussion; Judi Silvano, soprano voice; Tim Haganis, trumpet; Kenny Werner, piano; Steve Swallow, electric bass; Scott Lee, bass (5,10); Charlie Haden, bass; Jack DeJohnette, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Recorded in January of 1991, *Sounds Of Joy* documents Lovano's first session with the late, great drummer Ed Blackwell (they would meet again in the studio later that year for Lovano's superb Blue Note album, *From The Soul*). The saxophonist, who has a strong affinity for drummers, responds with great gusto to Blackwell's loose, melodic approach to the kit, perhaps best exemplified by the title track and "Cedar Avenue Blues."

"Strength And Courage" highlights Blackwell's deftness at weaving African rhythms into the fabric of uptempo swing, while his brushwork on the melancholy ballad "Until The Moment Was Now" provides an alluring cushion for Lovano's rich, flowing tenor. Blackwell's New Orleans parade-drumming influence also surfaces on Paul Motian's "23rd Street Theme." Lovano's sheer daring is aptly demonstrated on the open-ended alto-clarinet vehicle, "Bass Space," and on "This One's For Lacy," split into separate crackling soprano dialogs with bass and drums. On the kinetic "Etenro" (Ornette backwards) he pays homage to another huge influence.

On *Universal Language*, his most intensely personal and adventurous undertaking to date, Lovano is in the presence of another drumming great, Jack DeJohnette, whose power, precision fills, and sizzling swing factor bring out a more aggressive edge to Joe's playing. A continuation of his experiments with his seven-piece Wind Ensemble (see 1989's *Worlds On The French Label Bleu*), *Language* stresses Lovano's impressive compositional/arranging

chops as well as his authoritative horn. The uptempo swinger, "Josie & Rosie," based on Dizzy Gillespie's "Woody 'n You," harkens back to Joe's days in the Woody Herman big band, while the meditative "Worship," written for two entwining sopranos, tuned gongs, and bowed bass, could have been composed while on retreat at a Zen monastery. The droning interplay between Joe's searching tenor and Kenny Werner's powerful block chording on "Sculpture" carries a distinct McCoy-Trane vibe, while Joe's burly tone on the romantic ballad, "This is Always," bears the Ben Webster-Coleman Hawkins stamp. His more avant side is represented by the uptempo Ornette-ish vehicle, "Hypnosis."

The sound of Haden's acoustic bass with Swallow's electric bass enrich the bottom, while Judi Silvano's wordless vocals blend effectively in the upper register like a second soprano saxophone. Trumpeter Tim Hagans turns in some bright, bristling solos. And De-Johnette, who plays symphonies on the kit throughout, is prominently featured on the harmonically and rhythmically dense ensemble offerings, "Chelsea Rendezvous," "Cleveland Circle," and "Lost Nations." Lovano makes an evolutionary leap in his career with this remarkable album.

—Bill Milkowski



## Lee Ritenour

**WES BOUND**—GRP 9697: *WES BOUND*; *BOSS CITY*; *4 ON 6*; *A LITTLE BUMPIN'*; *WAITING IN VAIN*; *GOIN' ON TO DETROIT*; *A NEW DAY*; *OCEAN AVE.*; *ROAD SONG*; *WEST COAST BLUES*. (50:08)

**Personnel:** Ritenour, guitar; Bob James, Alan Broadbent (6,8), John Beasley (6,8), keyboards; David Witham (2,5), Ronnie Foster (3), organ; Melvin Davis, John Palitucci (6,8), bass; Gary Novak, Harvey Mason, drums, percussion; Cassio Duarte, percussion (6,8); Maxi Priest, Phil Perry, Kate Markowicz, Carmen Twillie, vocals (5).

★ ★ ★ 1/2

Ritenour has long claimed Wes Montgomery as one of the influences in his trick bag, and here he pays a more-or-less direct tribute to the late, great guitarist. It could be said that Ritenour shares with Montgomery at least one attribute beyond thumb-activated octave thumping and velvety bluesiness. Both suffered critical slings and arrows for a tendency to veer away from the more adventurous music of their early careers toward a more commercial carrot later on. You can still hear Wes on MUZAK; you can hear Rit regularly on WAVE stations. What goes around comes around.

That said, though, this is one of Ritenour's most rewarding projects in years. Ritenour taps

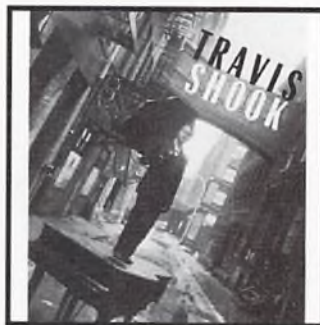
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easily into the inherent suavity of Wesness, neatly stirring in understated riffs in lush, softly swinging arrangements. He peels off some fluent, inspired playing on "Boss City" and generally does right by the spirit of his tributee, especially on the five Montgomery originals.

Midway through the album, however, two irrelevant tracks disrupt the flow and logic of the project: a softcore reggae reading of Bob Marley's "Waiting In Vain" must be an attempt at commercial appeal, and "A New Day" presents the type of facile, faceless happy jazz that makes you want to say "wipe off that silly grin and play some music." —Josef Woodard



**Lew Soloff**

**LITTLE WING**—Sweet Basil 7308-2: LA TOALLA; TRUE CONFESSIONS; ALLIGATORY CROCODILE;

HEALING POWER; PARA LOS PAPINES; CORAL CANYON; TAPAJACK; LITTLE WING. (64:29)

**Personnel:** Soloff, trumpet; Ray Anderson, trombone; Gil Goldstein, Pele Levin, keyboards; Mark Egan, bass; Kenwood Dennard, drums; Manolo Badrena, percussion.

★ ★ ★ ★ 1/2

**Sleepy Matsumoto**

**PAPILLON**—Sweet Basil 7309-2: TABOO; SPEAK LOW; DANCING GIRL'S DREAM; GISSHA; LOVE ME TENDER; BESAME MUCHO; MELLOW MOON; SAMBA DE ORPHEUS; ANGEL WINGS; IT'S ALL RIGHT WITH ME; CITY IN THE MORNING; PAPILLON; DUKE'S DAYS. (61:15)

**Personnel:** Hidehiko "Sleepy" Matsumoto, tenor sax; Randy Brecker, Lew Soloff, trumpet; Chris Hunter, alto sax; David Spinozza, guitar; Gil Goldstein, piano; Cliff Carter, synthesizer; Anthony Jackson, bass; Steve Gadd, drums; Sammy Figueroa, Manolo Badrena, percussion; Carolyn Leonhart, vocals.

★ ★ 1/2

Lew Soloff's *Little Wing* brings to mind 1974's *The Gil Evans Orchestra Plays The Music Of Jimi Hendrix* (Bluebird), of which Soloff was a part. The trumpeter shows off all kinds of chops on *Little Wing*, from dynamic fusion on Denard's "La Toalla" to a New Orleans second-line blues on Ray Anderson's "Alligatory Crocodile." He blows dirty funk on Carla Bley's "Healing Power," and shows elegance and smarts on

"Coral Canyon." With Anderson's awesome bone as sparring partner on Don Alias' "Para Los Papines," the cagey and explosive Denard on traps, and a creative producer like Steve Swallow to frame the sleek, solid band, Soloff sounds like he's in heaven here. His playing is graceful, and he strikes each note with power and ease. This album is a delightful, well-paced, and very musical effort on the part of all involved. And it kicks.

On a newer release from Sweet Basil Records, "Sleepy" Matsumoto blows big tenor with the NY City first-calls. What's missing, though, is a creative selection of songs. Arranger Dave Matthews doesn't really distinguish himself that much with the standards here, other than laying a cool funk treatment to "It's All Right With Me" and a tune-saving horn arrangement on "Besame Mucho." Granted, there are a few polyrhythmic fireworks from the old master Gadd, but there's not enough beef here to offset the embarrassing puff pieces like "Love Me Tender" and "Papillon." —Robin Tolleson



**Guru**

**JAZZMATAZZ**—Chrysalis 24830: INTRO; LOUNGIN'; WHEN YOUR (CQ) NEAR; TRANSIT RIDE; NO TIME TO PLAY; DOWN THE STREETS; TAKE A LOOK AT YOURSELF; TRUST ME; SLICKER THAN MOST; LE BIEN, LE MAL; SIGHTS IN THE CITY. (44:06)

**Personnel:** Guru, raps; Donald Byrd, trumpet (1); Branford Marsalis (4), Courtney Pine (12), tenor saxophone; Ronnie Jordan, guitar (5); Roy Ayers, vibes (8); Lonnie Liston Smith, keyboards (6); N'Dea Davenport (2), Carlene Anderson (12), vocals.

★ ★ ★ 1/2

**Digable Planets**

**REACHIN' (A NEW REFUTATION OF TIME AND SPACE)**—Pendulum 61414: IT'S GOOD TO BE HERE; PACIFICS; WHERE I'M FROM; WHAT COOL BREEZES DO; TIME AND SPACE (A NEW REFUTATION OF); REBIRTH OF SLICK (COOL LIKE DAT); LAST OF THE SPIDDYOCKS; JIMMI DIGGIN EATS; LA FEMME FATAL; ESCAPISM (GETTIN' FREE); APPOINTMENT AT THE FAT CLINIC; NICKEL BAGS; SWOON UNITS; EXAMINATION OF WHAT. (56:39)

**Personnel:** Butterfly, Ladybug, Doodlebug, raps, production.

★ ★ ★ ★ 1/2

The crossroads where jazz and hip-hop hang are getting busy. Quincy Jones and Miles Davis have stopped by there. Greg Osby is a young sax turk immersing himself in the hip-hop. But it works from the other end of the spectrum: Guru and Digable Planets are two fresh cases in point. The genres are still learning how to talk to



**LOST TRIBE**

**BEN PEROWSKY**  
drums/sampling

**ADAM ROGERS**  
guitar

**DAVID GILMORE**  
guitar/  
guitar synthesizer

**DAVID BINNEY**  
alto sax

**FIMA EPHRON**  
bass

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ambient music and third world rhythms, rock-

'n' roll and r&b, a debut album

of true mutation music.

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L.A. Times

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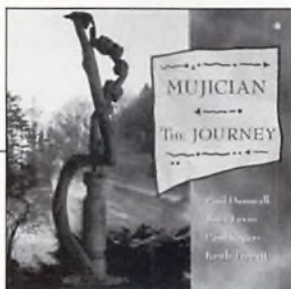
each other, but the crosstalk is heating up.

Rapper Guru, kingpin of Gang Starr, is the force behind *Jazzmatazz*, a project that continues the saga first crystallized when he collaborated with Branford Marsalis for "Jazz Thing" from the soundtrack to *Mo' Better Blues*. "Who put the jazz in the hip-hop funk? It's me, chump," Guru says on the chest-thumping "Slicker Than Most." "I'm slick, because I'm demolishing rappers, lickety split." Guru also swerves off the thematic turf of street life and love to pay respects to the jazz players at his party. "These are folks that I'll never forget, because they're deep."

But most of the tracks are less about jazz blowing than r&b-esque, pentatonic riff opportunities with limited harmonic parameters. Along the way, a few strong gusts of solo activity rise above the raps, from guitarist Jordan on "No Time To Play" and Courtney Pine on the out "chorus" of "Sights In The City." The jazz spirit is a subtext—a sonic cloak—instead of an equal-time proposition in the mix.

Meanwhile, Digable Planets manages to make a seamless and inventive style-leaping statement, although the handiwork is all in the rapping and the sampling. Among the sources in their sample bag are Sonny Rollins, Eddie Harris, and Steven Bernstein's muted-trumpet solo. But the real hip-hop centerpiece is "Rebirth Of Slick (Cool Like Dat)," in which Art Blakey and James Williams—using Williams' "Stretchin'"—provide a swing-basted back-

drop for a celebration of merging, converging cultures. "Appointment At The Fat Clinic" serves up a treatise on the evolutionary state of jazz at the moment.  
—Josef Woodard



## Mujician

**THE JOURNEY**—Cuneiform 42: *THE JOURNEY*. (53:48)

**Personnel:** Paul Dunmall, E-flat clarinet, soprano, tenor, baritone saxophones; Keith Tippett, piano; Paul Rogers, bass; Tony Levin, drums, percussion.

★ ★ ★ ★

More than 40 years after Lennie Tristano—or maybe Bud Freeman—recorded the first totally improvised jazz performances, free play remains supremely challenging and woefully

misunderstood. For experienced practitioners, free-jazz aspires to the same lyricism, attention to pace and space as pre-structured music.

In the course of this "spontaneous composition," this working Brit quartet breathes as a unit, taking the music in quick succession through myriad contrasting episodes, ranging from the quiet and spare to the furious, while leaving each player room to dominate for a while. No matter how satisfying a groove may be, they keep moving on. Sometimes they sound downright traditional. In one sequence, Dunmall plays throaty tenor off Tippett's comping chords, as Rogers shadows closely (and Levin lays out).

Each player has a strong voice. Tippett—who's worked with creative musicians from King Crimson to Louis Moholo to Andy Sheppard—plays piano inside and out, damping strings by hand, or draping a chain across them for brittle prepared-piano effects. Dunmall, of the London Jazz Composers Orchestra, plays each of his reeds with a distinctive tang, if common burliness. Here he plays them in the order listed, so the performance acquires greater gravity as it proceeds. Rogers' pliable, elastic sound buoys the group with seeming effortlessness, like an adult bobbing a child on his knee. Levin (like Rogers) can shade, reinforce, and prod without limiting his bandmates' options. They're individuals, but years together has made them some other kind of animal: a mujician, singular.  
—Kevin Whitehead

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—Gary Giddins, Village Voice

"The most impressive young tenor saxophonist in 15 years."  
—Lee Jeske, NY Post

## JOSHUA REDMAN

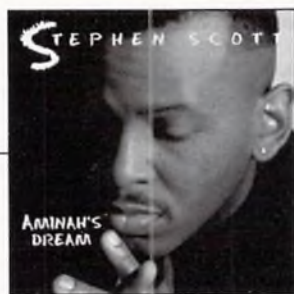
The debut album. On Warner Bros. Cassettes and Compact Discs.



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**Stephen Scott**

**AMINAH'S DREAM**—Verve 314 517 996-2: *AMINAH'S DREAM; BEHIND THE SCENES; YOUNG CONFUCIUS; POSITIVE IMAGES (MOTHER, FATHER); THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM; WHEN GOD CREATED WOMAN; L'IL BRO' . . . LIFE GOES ON; YOU ARE TOO BEAUTIFUL; MOONTRANE; IN THE SPUR OF THE MOMENT.* (57:27)

**Personnel:** Scott, piano; Ron Carter, bass; Elvin Jones, drums; Terell Stafford, trumpet (1,4,6,9); Justin Robinson, alto sax (1,4,6,9); Don Braden, tenor sax (1,4,6,9); Jamal Haynes, trombone (1,4,6,9); Bob Stewart, tuba (1).

★ ★ ★

Stephen Scott is the stealth pianist of jazz's youth movement. Much more often than not, he gets the job done in an unassuming way, winning you over before you know it. Sidestepping the sophomore jinx, *Aminah's Dream* is a satisfying second album that documents Scott's steady progress toward the forefront of his generation's committed jazz artists.

For most of the date, Scott's playing and writing combine earthy grooves, well-turned phrases, and short-tethered complexities, approximating some kind of intersection between mid-'60s Silver, Hancock, and Blue Note-session Tyner. Only on the slightly too-studied solo blues, "The Pit And The Pendulum," and "When

God Created Woman"—where Elvin Jones' churning cross rhythms and the astringent horn voicings prompt comparison with Wynton Marsalis' *Soul Gestures In Southern Blue*—does Scott sound like a product of the '80s.

On trio outings like "Behind The Scene," "L'il Bro . . .," and "In The Spur Of The Moment," the interplay between Scott and Jones is exuberant. Often, however, Ron Carter's work is only of minimal interest, especially during his thin solo on Woody Shaw's "Moontrane." That the 23-year-old Scott even knows the tune is noteworthy is downright impressive.

—Bill Shoemaker



**Eddie Daniels**

**UNDER THE INFLUENCE**—GRP 9716: *SLAM DUNK; MR. COOL (FOR STAN); WALTZ FOR BILL (EVANS); MEUS MELHORES MOMENTOS; HEARTLAND; I HEAR A RHAPSODY; WEAVER OF DREAMS; COYOTE WAITS; RIO GRANDE; I FALL IN LOVE TOO EASILY; FIVE.* (67:35)

**Personnel:** Daniels, tenor sax, clarinet; Alan Pasqua, piano; Michael Formanek, bass; Peter Erskine, drums, percussion.

★ ★ ★ ★

Commercial success for Eddie Daniels has

meant lots of fans and plenty of work as a clarinetist. *Under The Influence* comes across like a genealogy reaffirming his jazz roots. He returns to tenor, which he played in his early years for the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra. Daniels gives skeptics a run for their money, letting loose with a burly, edgy sound that carries on the broad-shouldered tradition of Sonny Rollins and John Coltrane.

Pianist Alan Pasqua contributed several tunes to this recording, including "Heartland," an artfully simple melody that I couldn't get out of my head. The rapport between Pasqua and Daniels is something to savor. So is Daniels' clarinet playing, which continues to set a standard for suppleness.

Appealing as they are, these performances by Daniels and his supportive rhythm section tend to lack the willingness of his influences (say, Coltrane or Bill Evans) to take risks. On the captivating "Weaver Of Dreams," Daniels' lines tumble out with the facility of Rollins but not the freedom. True, Daniels evolved from a post-Coltrane bag, but on this recording he integrates those influences into a more contemporary sound.

—Elaine Guregian



**Gerry Hemingway**

**DOWN TO THE WIRE**—hat ART 6121: *IF YOU LIKE; SPACE 2; BACK AGAIN SOME TIME; WALTZ ANYWHERE; N.T.; DEBBY WARDEN 3.* (43:35)

**Personnel:** Hemingway, drums, steel drums; Michael Moore, alto saxophone, clarinet, bass clarinet; Wolter Wierbus, trombone; Mark Dresser, bass.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**Tambastics**

**TAMBASTICS**—Music & Arts 704: *YAWNING SHOES; CHTHONIA; FLOATION; FORCE; TAMBRAGE ROSE; WOODY VECTOR; DIGESTIF; NOT HAVING 2.* (67:54)

**Personnel:** Robert Dick, flute; Mark Dresser, bass; Gerry Hemingway, drums, percussion; Denman Maroney, piano.

★ ★ ★

**Marilyn Crispell**

**HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE SUMMER OF 1992 AMERICAN TOUR**—Music & Arts 758: *SUITE FOR TRIO; SOLSTICE; NOT WANTING; COMMODORE; MOUVEMENTS CHANGEABLES; RAIN; ANGELS.* (70:42)

**Personnel:** Crispell, piano; Reggie Workman, bass; Gerry Hemingway, drums, percussion.

★ ★ ★ ★

When does Gerry Hemingway sleep? Aside

**WAKE UP AND DREAM**

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**AGAINST THE REPRODUCTION OF DEATH**  
**AGAINST THE CONSPIRACY OF IMITATORS**

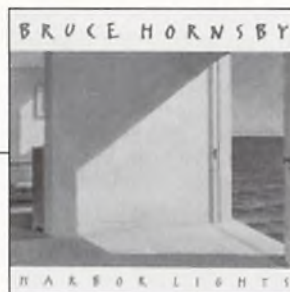
April — Nicky Skopelitis - Ekstasis (featuring Ziggy Modeliste, Jah Wobble, Jaki Liebeck, Bochim Attar, Bill Laswell, Amino Claudine Myers, and many more);  
July — Umar Bin Hassan - Be Bop Or Be Dead (with fellow Last Poet Abiodun Oyewale, featuring Buddy Miles, Bernie Worrell, Bootsy Collins, Foday Musa Suso, Aiyb Dieng, and more); look for Orb remixes of "Mantra"!

from leading his quartet, he works with several groups, finds time to compose, and is at work on a large-ensemble project. *Down To The Wire* succeeds so well because Hemingway has developed a book of varied, tuneful compositions, and because of the exceptional dynamics of this quartet. Anthony Braxton qualifies as a mentor for Hemingway, and the drummer learned from Braxton's creative manipulations of conventional forms. "If You Like" has a swagger and strut reminiscent of Mingus via the Art Ensemble of Chicago, and "Back Again Some Time" starts from the blues. ("Waltz Anywhere" is self-explanatory.) Hemingway likes to write for trombone, and Dutch trombonist Wolter Wierbos brings a strong blues feeling to the group, in addition to remarkable control and a good growl. Wierbos and reedman Michael Moore complement each other wonderfully, whether harmonizing or playing counterpoint. Moore plays some beautiful melodies on clarinet, and contributes the soulful "Debby Warden 3." Bassist Mark Dresser is a veteran of Hemingway (and Braxton) bands, and his versatility fits perfectly in this program. Hemingway's role is one of composer and team player. He allows his soloists plenty of room, swings hard behind them, and adds percussive commentary, but rarely solos. Throughout, there's a warmth and earthiness that balance the group's explorations (e.g., "Space 2") and make *Down To The*

*Wire* highly user-friendly.

Despite the presence of Hemingway and Dresser, the Tambastics quartet doesn't play "jazz." Tambastics deconstructs music into raw elements of twitching wires and resonating surfaces, exploring "extended technique" through Cageian controlled improvisations. Form is largely abandoned in favor of intriguing sonic textures. Hemingway's "Yawning Shoes," for example, plots a series of encounters for combinations of players. Tambastics' goal is to draw the listener into an unfamiliar world of sound and make that world real. Too often, though, the sparsity of rhythmic or melodic content strands the listener in an abstract, impenetrable environment.

Pianist Marilyn Crispell's music presents different risks and challenges. *Highlights* captures her volcanic trio with Hemingway and bassist Reggie Workman. Crispell attacks with accelerating torrents and clusters of notes. If her percussive style recalls Cecil Taylor, her playing has a unique, almost elemental flow. Workman is the rhythmic anchor, and he frees Hemingway to interact with Crispell, embellishing her structures or responding with salvos of his own. "Rain," a Crispell feature, builds from quiet introspection, gaining in speed and force to the inevitable cloudburst. Hemingway follows with a charged percussion solo ("Angels") that matches Crispell's intensity. They should have called it "Hurricane." —*Jon Andrews*



## Bruce Hornsby

**HARBOR LIGHTS**—RCA 66114-2: *HARBOR LIGHTS; TALK OF THE TOWN; LONG TALL COOL ONE; CHINA DOLL; FIELDS OF GRAY; RAINBOW'S CADILLAC; PASSING THROUGH; THE TIDE WILL RISE; WHAT A TIME; PASTURES OF PLENTY.* (53:33)

**Personnel:** Hornsby, piano, accordion, organ, vocals; Jimmy Haslip, bass; John Molo, drums; Pat Metheny, guitar (1,2,4,8); Branford Marsalis, soprano sax (2,3,6); Phil Collins, bongos (2); background vocals (3-5); John Bigham, guitar (1,6,7); Jeff Lorber, programming (1,2); Jerry Garcia, guitar (7,10); Glenn Wilson, baritone sax (6,8,9); John D'earth, trumpet (6,8,9); Bonnie Raitt (6,8); Debra L. Henry, Bona Cheri Wells, background vocals (9).

★ ★ ★ ★

Like Sting, Donald Fagen, and Billy Joel, Bruce Hornsby is an accomplished popsmith with

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grander pretensions. Boasting a cast of all-stars, Hornsby's *Harbor Lights* is an ambitious blend that ranks with the best of Sting's efforts in this "jazzy" direction. Granted, Hornsby is no Phineas Newborn, but his chordal voicings are far more adventurous and his phrasing far more supple than your average million-seller pop star. I also appreciate the little ear cookies he tosses into the pop formula, like the sly reharmonization of the changes on the title cut, just to tweak Metheny's solo, the rampaging, Return To Forever-styled unison lines executed on "China Doll," or the subtle shift to  $\frac{3}{4}$  during his "What A Time" solo. And dig his quote from Bird's "Billie's Bounce" right in the middle of a two-listed piano solo on the rousing "What A Time." Bebop meets Aaron Copland, which is definitely some common ground he shares with Metheny.

Branford is back in familiar territory here, blowing cool riffs around Hornsby's vocals on "Long Tall Cool One" and trading licks with piano on "Talk Of The Town." And drummer John Molo plays the Omar Hakim role here, laying down backbeats with a vengeance while throwing in slick fills. The strangest cross-pollination happens on "Rainbow's Cadillac," a kind of hip-hop-country affair that somehow works. Picture slamming. Heavy D beats melded onto John Denver's "Thank God I'm A Country Boy." New Jack Bluegrass anyone?

—Bill Milkowski



**Charlie Sepulveda**

**ALGO NUESTRO "OUR THING"**—Antilles 314 512 768-2: *EL GRINGO*; *MAL SOCIAL*; *ALGO NUESTRO*; *PUERTO RICO*; *NINA'S MOOD*; *MASTERY OF ALL SITUATIONS*; *LA MENTIRA*; *EPISODE FROM A VILLAGE DANCE*; *MR. BB.* (54:49)  
**Personnel:** Sepulveda, trumpet; David Sanchez, tenor, soprano saxes; Edward Simon, piano; Andy Gonzalez, Johnny Torres (4), bass; Adam Cruz, drums; Richie Flores, congas, bongos; Steve Turre, trombone (4); Edgardo Miranda, cuatro (9); Pete Rodriguez Jr., maracas (4); Jimmy Delgado, cowbell (4); Tito Rodriguez, guiro (3).

★ ★ ★ ★ 1/2

As Latin jazz gains mainstream acceptance, Latin jazzers move closer to the mainstream, flaunting their bebop mastery while maintaining their Afro-Caribbean roots.

Charlie Sepulveda, formerly lead trumpeter in Eddie Palmieri's band, plays hard-bop with passion and grace. His second solo album, more focused than its predecessor, glows with energy and ensemble empathy. Sepulveda's fat, creamy tone crackles with bluesy intensity

on uptempo riff tunes like "El Gringo" and caresses lustrous ballads like "La Mentira." Though his primary influence is Miles Davis, he blows with Cuban-style power, and his Puerto Rican pride shows in the elegant *danza* rhythm of "Algo Nuestro" and the driving *plena* beat of "Mr. BB." David Sanchez wails on his own urgently introspective "Mal Social," and Edward Simon plays witty tribute to Palmieri on "Puerto Rico," but it's the rhythm section of Andy Gonzalez, Adam Cruz, and Richie Flores that keeps the fire burning throughout.

—Larry Birnbaum



**Ron Carter**

**RON CARTER MEETS BACH**—Blue Note CDP 7 80510 2: *AIR*; *CHRIST LAG IN TODESBANDEN*; *WACHET AUF, RUFT UNS DIE STIMME*; *ARIOSO*; *JESU, JOY OF MAN'S DESIRING*; *ES WOLL UNS GOTT GENADIG SEIN*; *GAVOTTE EN RONDEAU*; *PRELUDE, INTERLUDE AND FUGUE IN C MAJOR*; *SICILIANO*; *PRAELUDIUM IN C MAJOR, INTERLUDE, PRAELUDIUM IN C MINOR*; *KOMM SUSSESSER TOD, KOMM SEL'GE RUH*. (41:40)

**Personnel:** Carter, double and piccolo basses.

★ ★ ★ 1/2

**Ron Carter & Jim Hall**

**LIVE AT VILLAGE WEST**—Concord Jazz CCD-4245: *BAG'S GROOVE*; *ALL THE THINGS YOU ARE*; *BLUE MONK*; *NEW WALTZ*; *DOWN FROM ANTIGUA*; *SUMMER NIGHT*; *ST. THOMAS*; *EMBRACEABLE YOU*; *LAVERNE WALK*; *BAUBLES, BANGLES AND BEADS.* (58:47)

**Personnel:** Carter, bass; Hall, guitar.

★ ★ ★ ★ 1/2

*Ron Carter Meets Bach* is not a gimmick, nor is it a "jazz interpretation." If you want jazz, skip to the next paragraph. Aided only by multi-tracking, Carter confronts the old master directly with transcriptions for bass and piccolo bass. Carter doesn't allow himself the luxury of adapting cello suites or sonatas—most selections are derived from cantatas, along with a few pick hits. *Meets Bach* is clearly a labor of love. Carter's most sensitive and personal interpretations are played pizzicato, solo, or with minimal accompaniment. The bassist devised two interludes that blend smoothly into the Bach pieces while allowing Carter to play his strongest personal statements. (More of these liberties would have been welcome.) Less is more where the overdubs are concerned. Arrangements of Bach's chorales utilize a "choir" composed of Carter's multi-tracked arco bass parts, and the backing can sound tentative and a bit thin. Even if you're not

a fan of baroque music, the "Bach Project" is worth hearing for Carter's display of virtuosity and interpretive skills.

Carter and guitarist Jim Hall recorded *Live At Village West* at an atmospheric 1982 club date, where old friends revisited favorite tunes. Carter and Hall are equal partners in this enterprise, trading places in the "lead" and "support" roles. The recording quality is first-rate. You almost see Carter's spidery hands walk the strings through a veil of cigarette smoke. (You hear the faint clatter of glasses, but that's ambience.) Hall picks chords that are unexpected, but fit perfectly anyway. Carter favors the double bass, and plays with tremendous agility and resonance. "Embraceable You" and Oscar Pettiford's "Laverne Walk" are strong features for Hall and Carter, respectively, and the energy level gears up noticeably when the duo investigates Sonny Rollins' "St. Thomas."

You rarely get so strong a sense of anticipation and empathy between players. The performance sounds so smooth and effortless that these two seem to approach perfection without breaking a sweat.

—Jon Andrews



**Curlew**

**A BEAUTIFUL WESTERN SADDLE**—Cuneiform Rune 50: *LET'S SIT RIGHT DOWN/THE PASSING*; *SUCH CREDENTIALS AS HAVE BECOME PSEUDONYM*; *POEM FOR GRETCHEN RUTH*; *ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS*; *PEKING WIDOW*; *THE PRINCE*; *WHAT IS FREE TO A GOOD HOME?*; *STILL TRYING*; *BREAKFAST*; *TODAY*; *SONG SUNG LONG*; *HUMAN WEATHER WORDS*; *NOW CAN YOU TELL ME OR CAN IT STILL BE TOLD?*; *PAINT ME!* (57:25)

**Personnel:** George Cartwright, alto, tenor sax; Amy Denio, vocals; Davey Williams, guitar; Tom Cora, cello; Ann Ruppel, bass; Pippin Barnett, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ 1/2

You may recall the words of Canadian poet Paul Haines from the acclaimed albums *Escalator Over The Hill* and *Tropic Appetites*, his 1970s encounters with Carla Bley et al. On *A Beautiful Western Saddle*, his linguistic flair is made tuneful by the most happening avant-rock outfit making the scene, supplemented by the voice of Seattle's Tone Dogs. The results may take some time to grow on you, but once they're stuck in yer noodle, you won't want to lose 'em.

This project takes Curlew's offbeat mix of funk and kerplunk into new territory, drawing out quieter and more singable elements; in a couple of places they sound a touch like Art Bears—though Denio's voice is infinitely

warmer than the icy Dagmar Kraus'. Williams is the disc's disaster-master; check his spicular slide hat-trick on "Breakfast," "Today," and his own "Song Sung Long." Cora and Cartwright are also terrific. Denio is great throughout ("The Prince," especially), the rhythm section rocks, and the compositions work in neat ways with Haines' funny, sexy, smart, often brief poems.

—John Corbett



## Various Artists

**SUNSET SWING**—Black Lion BLCD 760171: / *FOUND A NEW BABY; I SURRENDER DEAR; TEA FOR YOU; SKYLARK; CALIFORNIA CLIPPER; VENTURA JUMP; WINDJAMMER; I DON'T STAND A GHOST OF A CHANCE WITH YOU; ALL THE THINGS YOU ARE; EXPERIMENT PERILOUS; GET HAPPY; BLUES IN MY HEART; SWEETS; IT WAS MEANT TO BE; JEFFERSON JUMP; NOTHIN' FROM NOTHIN'; I FOUND A NEW BABY; I NEVER KNEW; THESE FOOLISH THINGS; MY BLUE HEAVEN; I COVER THE WATERFRONT; MESSIN' ON MELROSE.* (77:27)

**Personnel:** Howard McGhee, Buddy Childers, Harry Edison, Emmett Berry, trumpet; Vic Dickenson, trombone; Willie Smith, Lem Davis, alto sax; Charlie Ventura, Vido Musso, Lucky Thompson, Herbie Haymer, tenor sax; Arnold Ross, Andre Previn, Dodo Marmarosa, piano; Dave Barbour, Les Paul, guitar; Artie Shapiro, John Simmons, Eddie Safranski, Red Callender, bass; Nick Fatool, Lee Young, Shadow Wilson, Henry "Tucker" Green, Ray Bauduc, drums; Ernie Sheppard, vocal (16); unknown trumpet, tenor saxophone, piano, guitar, and bass (15,22).

★★★★ 1/2

*Sunset Swing* is an anthology of 78s recorded by eight ad-hoc swing combos sculpted from the ranks of big bands (Count Basie, Harry James, Artie Shaw, Stan Kenton, and Gene Krupa) and small groups (Coleman Hawkins, Eddie Heywood, and Ray Bauduc). All of the sessions took place between March and November, 1945, and feature such outstanding jazz soloists as Howard McGhee (at the time with Hawkins), Harry Edison and Lucky Thompson (Basie), Emmett Berry, Lem Davis, and Vic Dickenson (Heywood), Willie Smith, Arnold Ross, and Nick Fatool (James), Charlie Ventura (Krupa), Vido Musso, Buddy Childers, and Eddie Safranski (Kenton), Dodo Marmarosa (Shaw), and the 16-year-old Hollywood prodigy and Tatum/Cole disciple, Andre Previn. The other participants, such as Herbie Haymer, Les Paul, Dave Barbour, and Lee Young, were mostly drawn from the studios.

Of the 22 titles collated here, the spots that impress the most are Ventura's Hawkins-inspired ballads, "I Surrender Dear" and "Ghost Of A Chance," "Tea For Two" with sparkling

McGhee and Ventura, the Previn Trio's "California Clipper," McGhee's solo on "Ventura Jump," Smith and Thompson on "Windjammer," McGhee, Smith, and Thompson on "Experiment Perilous" and "I Found A New Baby," Edison's "Get Happy" and "Sweets," the Hawkins-like Musso and Eldridge-intoned Childers on "I Never Knew," and Dickenson wherever his slyly sardonic voice appears. The most curious items here are those by famed ex-Bob Crosby dixieland drummer Ray Bauduc, whose two

sextet titles, "Jefferson Jump" and "Messin' On Melrose," are played, quite uncharacteristically, in the prevailing modern swing mode. Although of lesser importance, it should be pointed out that the titles of tracks 12 and 14 are reversed on both the disc and the insert, Davis' interpretation of Benny Carter's "Blues In My Heart" obviously being the second of the two in recorded sequence; an error which, combined with the arbitrary programming, explains the half-point penalty.

—Jack Sohmer

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**John Coltrane**

**DEAR OLD STOCKHOLM**—Impulse! GRD-120: *DEAR OLD STOCKHOLM; AFTER THE RAIN; ONE UP; ONE DOWN; AFTER THE CRESCENT; DEAR LORD.* (48:35)  
**Personnel:** Coltrane, tenor sax; McCoy Tyner, piano; Jimmy Garrison, bass; Roy Haynes, drums.

★★★★ 1/2

It's clear why Roy Haynes, as David Wild's program notes state, was Coltrane's choice for drummer in his '60s quartet when Elvin Jones was unavailable. The fiery, hyperactive Haynes readily adapted his bop materials to the demands of modal structures, swinging mightily, with more attention to strict timekeeping and a lighter drum-kit sound than Jones. His percussion interplay with the soloists proves more

diffuse, however, and despite his best efforts, it must be admitted that a degree of weight and polyrhythmic density is absent here.

The change of drummers apparently doesn't affect Coltrane at all. You can hardly go wrong by this stage of Coltrane's career (the first three tracks are from 1963, the others from '65), for he had become a remarkably dependable improviser in terms of quality. There are lovely lyrical moments on "Dear Old Stockholm," though his revision of the folk song into a medium-up modal piece sounds somewhat tentative. The lyrical mood continues on "After The Rain," the central element of which is a striking and deceptive augmented fifth rise. And the other ballad, "Dear Lord," has surely become the most familiar of '60s Coltrane works, with its sweet, yearning chords and their warming resolutions, and Tyner's expansive piano solo.

The other two tracks are long, fiery works in fast tempos, shaped in cyclic structures; "After The Crescent" especially includes extended violent howling. "One Down" is worth the price of the disc—Coltrane's intensity is a wonder, with especially ingenious and varied melodic passages. After the sustained heat of Tyner's solo, Coltrane's reentry is brilliant. Altogether, this track is the master at the height of his powers. Incidentally, neither tune bears any real resemblance to "Crescent" (from *Crescent*) or "One Down, One Up" (from *New Thing At Newport*), respectively. —John Litweiler



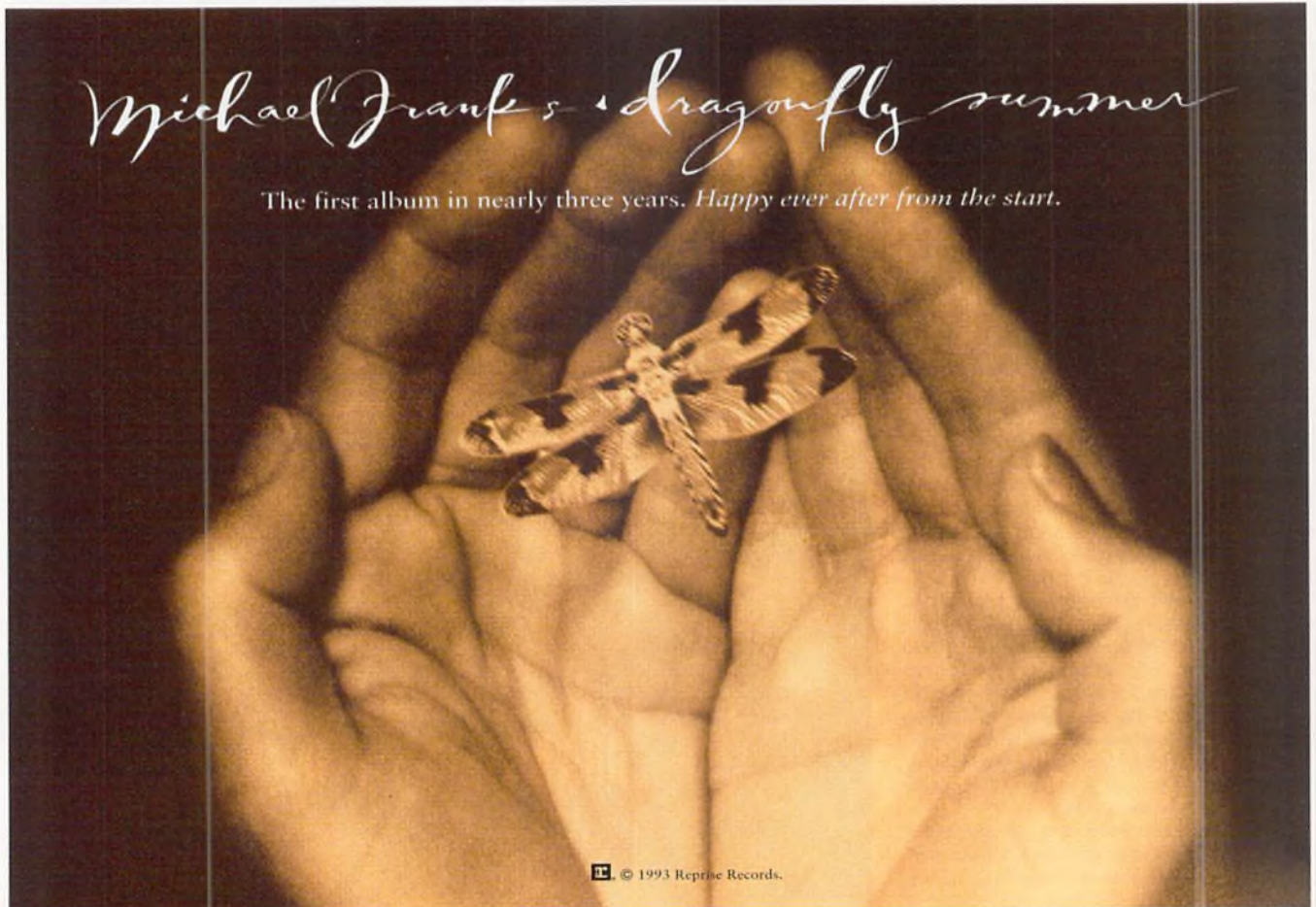
**Re-Birth Brass Band**

**TAKE IT TO THE STREET**—Rounder 2115: *TAKE IT TO THE STREET; CALEDONIA/FLIP, FLOP & FLY/RAGG MOPP; PIE Pt. 2; STEPPIN' OUT; CHAMELEON; CONCERT BAND CLINIC; SAME THING ON; KEEP THAT BODY SHAKING; TORNADO SPECIAL.* (49:33)

**Personnel:** Kermit Ruffins, trumpet, lead vocals; Philip Frazier, sousaphone; Keith Frazier, bass drum; Stafford Agee, trombone, vocals; John Gilbert, tenor sax; Ajay Mallery, snare drum; Reginald Steward, trombone; Glen Andrews, trumpet; Louis Jordan, maracas; Michael Brooks, percussion.

★★★★ 1/2

Like the Dirty Dozen and Treme brass bands, this outfit is all about good times and booty-shaking. In the sweaty do-whatcha-wanna-do



ambiance of New Orleans, with Second-liners taking an active part in the music, this earthy stuff is particularly infectious. And though some of the magic is invariably lost in the translation to disc, any brass-band recording is guaranteed to liven up any Yankee party.

What separates the Re-Birth Brass Band from Treme and the Dirty Dozen are the points of reference they use. While the more traditional Treme Brass Band might harken back to Kid Ory and Louis Armstrong, and the bop-conscious Dozen frequently covers material by the likes of Cannonball Adderley, Charlie Parker, and Dizzy Gillespie, the youngbloods in Re-Birth make references to the music of their time. Rather than covering the classic brass-band fare, they tackle more contemporary tunes like Steel Pulse's "Steppin' Out" and Herbie Hancock's "Chameleon." On the title cut there's a quote from Steve Miller's "Fly Like An Eagle." And their funky original, "Same Thing On," is based on a riff from Rick James' "Bustin' Out."

Re-Birth obviously respects the tradition, as you can hear on "Pie Pt. 2" and the brief "Concert Band Clinic" interlude, but they don't feel bound by it.

—Bill Milkowski



## Mouth Music

**MO-DI**—Rykodisc RCD 10242: *BIRNAM; HE MANDU; HOIREANN O; MILKING THE COW; WAITING; CRATHADH; AODAICH & ZBADBA; MAUDIT; SO STEP OFF.* (50:25)

**Personnel:** Jackie Joyce, Michaela Rowan, vocals; Martin Swan, keyboard, guitar, programming, percussion, violin (5,6), flute (3); Quee MacArthur, bass; George McDonald, alto sax (2); James MacKintosh, drums, percussion, drum-programming (6); Malcolm Shields, percussion (3,5,6); Andy Thorburn, accordion (7).

★ ★ ★ 1/2

## Zap Mama

**ZAP MAMA**—Luaka Bop/Warner Bros. 2/4-45183: *MUPEPE; BOTTOM; BRRRLAK!; ABADOU; TAKE ME COCO; PLEKETE; MIZIKE; BABANZELE; DIN DIN; I NE SUHE; GUZOPHELA; NABOMBELI YO; MARIE-JOSEE; NDJE MUKANIE; SON CUBANO.* (50:42)

**Personnel:** Marie Daulne, Cécilia Kankonda, Céline T Hooft, Sabine Kabongo, Sylvie Nawasadio, Fanchon Nuyens (4-6,9,11), Marie Cavenaile (3), vocals; David Weemaels (4,7,8,14), Jean-Louis Daulne (3,5,7), percussion.

★ ★ ★ ★

Make some room for hi-tech text, Euro-style. The eclectic Mouth Music and Zap Mama are both ultra-slickly produced cross-culti mashers that take the singing voice as focal point.

There's nothing anthropological or folkish about, either, which is understandable, since Mouth Music is the headbirth of Martin Swan, a Scottish television and advert-music producer, and *Zap Mama* was produced by the Belgian team of Vincent Kenis and Marc Hollander, who once led the art/improv-rock band Aqsak Maboul.

More synthetic than their self-named debut, on *Mo-Di*, Mouth Music's *modus o.* is crossing chunky dance grooves, jock-rock guitar riffs, tactile samples, and a vocal mix of Madonna and Celtic a cappella. Overall, it sounds more like Yoyo Honey than the Battlefield Band. In places it's just too mannered for me, like the vocoded sermon on "Milking The Cow" and the soporific "Waiting." But much of it's a hoot, especially "Birnam," "Crathadh" (great singing by Rowan), and its coda, "Zbadba," which features sweet slaviv-style fiddling.

Zap Mama's "Bottom" could be the vocal part from one of Mouth Music's more soul-soaked songs. Except for a bit of percussion, virtually everything here is female voice, though that's no limitation for leader Marie Daulne and pals. Daulne was born among the Bantou Pygmies and returned later from Belgium to study with them before forming Zap Mama. Their debut disc ranges from soul through a lot of "human-beat-box" chugging, tooting, and peeping ("Brrrlak!"), reggoid skanking ("Mizike"), and Pygmy polyphony ("Babanzélé"). "Abadou," the disc's coolest, weirdest cut, has a hypnotic backdrop and Arabic lead, while "I Ne Suhe" is built on a sneeze and ends with a remarkable imitation of a record slowing to a halt. Incidentally, for a touch of the real McCoy, get the excellent *Polyphonies Vocales Des Pygmees Mbenzele* on the French Inedit label.

—John Corbett



## Kirk Whalum

**CACHE**—Columbia 46931: *X-FACTOR; LOVE IS A LOSING GAME; LIVIN' IN THE STREETS; FRAGILE; LOVE SAW IT; ALWAYS A PART OF ME; CACHE; LANGUAGE OF LIFE; FALL IN LOVE AGAIN; OVER THE RAINBOW.*

**Personnel:** Whalum, tenor sax; with Ricky Lawson, Poogie Bell, Kenny MacDougald, drums; Carlos Rios, Paul Jackson Jr., Dean Brown, Nile Rodgers, Ray Fuller, Carl Burnett, guitar; Freddie Washington, Marcus Miller, Chris Walker, Wilton Felder, bass; Bill Cantos, Rick Jackson, Robbie Buchanan, Greg Phillinganes, Jerry Peters, Bob James, Rob Mullins, Philippe Saisse, Brad Cole, Preston Glass, keyboards; Gerald Albright, Andy Snitzer, Gary Bias, alto sax; Michael Davis, Reggie Young, Maurice Spears, trombone; Kent Smith, Ray Brown, trumpet; Roger Rosenberg,

Ernie Fields, baritone sax; Rose Stone, Alphonse Silas, Olivia McClurken, Lori-Ann Velez, James Williams, Veneese Thomas, Kevin Guillaume, Natalie Jackson, Lynne Fiddmont-Linsey, Fred White, Jevetta Steele, Jearlyn Steele Battle, Brenda Russell, Julie Delgado, Angela Bofill, Amy Keys, vocals.

★ ★ 1/2

## Eric Leeds

**THINGS LEFT UNSAID**—Paisley Park 945199-2: *ISLA MUJERES; TWO SISTERS; THINGS LEFT UNSAID; AGUADILLA; WOMAN IN CHAINS; TIMES GIFT; YAOUNDE; SOLDIERS THINGS; COMMUTING.* (53:03)

**Personnel:** Leeds, tenor sax, baritone saxophones, flute, keyboards; with David Budway, Ricky Peterson, piano; Gil Goldstein, Richard Martinez, synths; Chuck Loeb, Jeff Mirinov, Jimi Tunnel, guitar; Alphonso Johnson, Christopher Walker, Paul Socolow, bass; Alejandro Acuna, Dennis Chambers, drums; Mino Cinelu, Larry Fratangelo, percussion; Charlie Sepulveda, Brian Lynch, trumpet; Conrad Herwig, trombone; Lyndon Achee, steel drum; Vanesse Thomas, Sheryllyn Huffman, Sharon Bryant, Porter Carroll, vocals.

★ ★ ★ ★

Whalum's Texas Tenor drifts a bit too far toward Hollywood with this vocals-dominated effort, forgetting the true grit—the groove. Whalum's sound is big and assured, and he certainly doesn't overplay. On "Livin' In The Streets" he gets a great Fathead sound over the sparse, funky groove. "Ready" Freddy's bass syncopations and an out-of-the-blue modulation keep the sizzle going. The title track moves along like a '90s Crusaders jam, with the leader kicking it on down the road. Whalum does engage in some nice interplay with Bofill on the fade of "Always A Part Of Me," but he's wasted on forgettable cuts like "Love Is A Losing Game" and "Fragile." Gerald Albright tries to muster up some emotion on the puff piece "Love Saw It," a tune that probably came in way over budget. Where's Kirk? He should have saved whatever money he paid Jerry Peters for the nothing string arrangement, and bought a horn chart from Eric Leeds.

Leeds worked on most of his rousing 1991 album, *Times Squared*, with Prince, Sheila E, and the Minneapolis Gang. A wider cast of writers and arrangers—Santi Vega, Alphonso Johnson, Roland Orzabal, Tom Waits, Gil Goldstein, and His Purpleness on one cut—contribute to *Things Left Unsaid*. The deceptively tart Latin fling "Isla Mujeres" hints at what will come, but Johnson's "Two Sisters" really gets the serious ball rolling. It's a jaw-dropping, irreverent collage, with Leeds doing tasty, dangerous-sounding things with flute and bari. He combines potent chops with a nice flair for building subtle but commanding sounds. His tenor solo on "Aguadilla" spits and spills out the blues in all kinds of ways. "Things Left Unsaid" is definitely Leeds' nod to "A Remark You Made," a Joe Zawinul composition (and Wayne Shorter feature), complete with Alex Acuna's delicate but stinging crescendo on drums. The saxman has a knack for finding clever, effective tunes; and even with all the firepower around him there's a strong sense of Eric Leeds coming through it all. It's a memorable voice.

—Robin Tolleson

## Flatted Thirds Off The Griddle

by Frank-John Hadley

**G**uitar-slingers, hot-lick plectricks, call them what you will. Among the thousands of fiery guitar-playing bluesmen, there are only a scant few who seem to understand how to make use of the inventive and emotive power of rhythm, ringing unexpected twists on the old 12-bar form. Count those considered below among those well beyond the pale of the mundane.

Five years after busting out of Baton Rouge, **Kenny Neal**—conquerer of the Broadway stage and numerous venues around the globe—has a contemporary style unto himself. On his fourth album, *Bayou Blood* (Alligator 4809; 55:59; ★★★★★), his phrases flare with pointed feeling and fervid imagination, his harmonica conveys assurance, and his singing is at once randy and exuberant. The mix slams the bass and snare drum in your face. This would add up to an awe-inspiring Indy car with a blown-head gasket if Neal and his longtime producer Bob Greenlee didn't write songs sturdy enough for the musicians' vivid expression. They do; only the instrumental "Neal And Prey" is a showy



Kenny Neal: in your face

trifle. "Going To The Country" evidences Neal's deep respect for country blues.

With nearly 20 years of on-the-job training, principally in Boston- and Washington D.C.-area blues rooms, **Tom Principato** invests *Pip*

*Of The Iceberg* (Powerhouse 6102; 50:46; ★★★★★) with a tremendous swell of enthusiasm that marks his fifth effort as one of the high spots of blues-based guitar rock this decade or last. On gingery originals and covers (try Albert King's "Can't You See What You're Doing To Me"), his solos are models of emotional clarity and purposeful facility even as they skyrocket into dizzying realms; his staggering electronic effects have artistic—not vain-glorious—design. "Goodbye For Now," the ode for his father, emphasizes his dignified sense of style. As a singer, the six-string specialist just gets by.

Bostonian **Luther "Guitar Junior" Johnson's** creative motor runs at full throttle. On *It's Good To Me* (Bullseye Blues 9516; 43:58; ★★★★★), the former Muddy Waters Band trouser (1973-'80) uses distinct chest tones and a nasty Magic Sam-derived ax to heighten the sensuality of electric Chicago blues tunes (lesser-known items from Howlin' Wolf, Muddy, others) and occasional nods to Southern soul (notably Little Johnny Taylor's "If You Love Me Like You Say"). Johnson's sidemen are trustworthy, save for an indistinct pianist, but it's the torturously expressive Mississippi native by himself doing "Raise Your Window" that'll burn itself in your subconscious. Caveat emptor: the production is a little flat.

A mainstay of Washington D.C.'s popular Nighthawks for 14 years (till 1985) and more recently the Assassins, **Jimmy Thackery** has the tonal control, musical thought, expressive sincerity, velocity, and discipline to rank near the top of the blues-rock heavyweight division. *Empty Arms Motel* (Blind Pig 5001; 46:27; ★★★★★), a long-overdue feature set with muscular backing from his Drivers, has him transforming tunes associated with Stevie Ray Vaughan ("Rude Mood"), Bo Diddley ("I Can Tell"), and more, into his own compelling blood-and-thunder dramas. Thackery sings about women trouble in a voice that is virile, desperate, cunning, and no less satisfying than his imposing guitar.

**Robert Lucas' Built For Comfort** (Audioquest 1011; 45:44; ★★½), his third album, is mostly inspired by the Delta, with intermittent flames of Chicago-style urgency. The southern Californian, at 30 the youngest of the guitarists here, is a slide stylist of abundant if skittish power who also plays a piercing harmonica. His singing, however, is too consciously clever and has a forced air of believability, most apparent when he tries to shake tortured truths from Robert Johnson songs. An unpretentious electric band spurs Lucas on through about half the program, including two gritty stabs at social protest.

**Roy Rogers** is another talented Golden State guitarist whose dubious vocals make only mild demands on his listeners' intellect or feelings. As witness *Travellin' Tracks* (Blind Pig 5003; 54:25; ★★½)—a second genial blues/folk/country collaboration with pleasing singer and harp player **Norton Buffalo**. Would-be cowpoke Rogers sings with a stultifying emotional tone, unctuous, bleached like desert bones, and as a songwriter achieves only cordial blankness. His guitar lines throb more naturally with joy than pain. Recorded during acoustic-duo gigs or in the studio with or without a polite small band.

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## Career On The Fringes

by Josef Woodard

**T**he CD revolution, with its attendant focus on reissues, has been very good to **Paul Bley**. The incisive, improvisation-oriented pianist has been the subject of a fairly exhaustive retrospective program of reissuing from various labels—to which have been added newly recorded sessions.



KENJI TAKIGAMI

Paul Bley, '73: forward-leaner

For early evidence of Bley's work, check out the latest reissue of material with the Jimmy Giuffre 3, *Flight, Bremen 1961* (hat ART 6071; 62:39; ★★★★★), a healthy companion piece to the ECM Giuffre reissues of material from 1961. Bley, with Giuffre on clarinet and Steve Swallow in the probe mode on bass, demonstrates a bold but coloristic approach to making a trio work. On these 10 tracks, the trio-of-equals achieve a stylistic push-pull, swerving from improvisational, interactive freedom to Giuffre's witty thematic blueprints that still sound modern today.

Cut to April, 1992: Bley went into the studio with his old comrade, bassist Gary Peacock, and trumpet/flugelhorn player Franz Koglmann, and what finally emerged was a kind of tribute to the music of Annette Peacock (to whom both Bley and Peacock were once married). *Annette* (hat ART 6118; 64:52; ★★★★★½) winds up being a dark beauty of an album on which the trio sensitively springs off of Peacock's mostly mercurial, brooding music, finding there a harbor for inward mutual expression.

Of particular interest in hindsight is the album now entitled *Jaco* (IAI 123846; 36:39; ★★★★★½). Recorded in 1974, the session features young lions-in-waiting Jaco Pastorius and Pat Metheny from before the pair teamed up for the by-now classic Metheny album, *Bright Size Life*. Bley's electric-piano approach is refreshingly spare and percussive-accented, while Metheny's tone is scabrous and wah-wah-fied, the antithesis of his later signature tone. Down below, Pastorius unleashes disjointed doses, especially on "Batterie," of what would become

his mature vocabulary a few years later. Drummer Bruce Ditmas rounds out the band, which vamps on grooves comparable to the early '70s-era Miles ethos. There is a lot of noodling along the funk-swing axis in search of a collective identity, but the album is a raw-nerved, fascinating document, both of Bley's foray into electric jazz and as a crude archival snapshot of future jazz legends.

Also reissued from Bley's IAI works is the solo album, circa 1977, *Axis* (IAI 123853; 30:17; ★★★★★). The 16-minute title tune tells the story

upfront: abstract sound swipes intermingle with touches of stride rhythm, and tonality is always subject to change. The same approach holds true for "Porgy" and the other structured pieces in the set. As a solo pianist, Bley conveys admirable subtlety and resists easy displays of virtuosity, instead juggling between cerebral spaciousness and a Monk-on-Mars brand of kineticism.

In the mid-'60s, Bley was busy charting his own course through the free-jazz roundabout, and his albums for the small-but-mighty New

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York-based ESP label are significant chronicles of that period. The Paul Bley Quintet's *Barrage* (ESP 1008; 27:56. ★★★½), recorded in 1964, is a feverish outing, based on themes both manic and wry by Carla Bley, and featuring an antic Eddie Gomez on bass, Marshall Allen on alto sax, Dewey Johnson on trumpet, and Milford Graves on drums. If the fidgety leaves something to be desired—basement-brand recording tends to be especially cruel to drum kits, and Bley's piano is muffled in the mix—the intensity of the music compensates

for the crude reproduction. This is music with a dire need to escape.

1965's *Closer* (ESP 1021; 28:33. ★★★★★) features the Paul Bley Trio, with frequent future collaborators drummer Barry Altschul and bassist Swallow. Compared to the previous year's ESP date, it is the calm after the storm, highlighting Bley's oblique lyricism, as well as his will-to-wail. Those twin attributes have stood Bley in good artistic stead over the years, even if it hasn't won him as visible a place in the ranks as he has so richly deserved. **DB**



**Brother Virus**

**HAPPY HOUR**—Tulu 888130: *THE GLOCKNER OF NOTRE-DAMM & NETART; NO POWELLS TO THE PEOPLE; HACKENSACK; THE HYMN TO THE BIG CITIES; TONAL DUKE; SPIRIT; THE BILL; FRISELL AND FREE DOPE (FOR IVAN LENDL); YOU TRADITION? YES, OF COURSE!; FALL 75 89-WATCHING LANDSCAPES; HAPPY HOUR (THE DAUGHTER OF THE QUEEN OF THE CLEAN NOODLES).* (52:28)  
**Personnel:** Gunnar Geisse, guitar, vocal; Werner Klausnitzer, keyboards; Maurice de Martin, drums; Patrick Scales, bass.

★★★½

The casual consumer need only check out the song titles on this German quartet's album to get an idea of the contents therein. Brainy, freely genre-hopping, lined with smirking, wiseguy attitudes, but with the proper technical credentials to keep their eclectica in the realm of musicality—that's Brother Virus.

Recorded mostly at NYC's refuge of the musically dispossessed, the Knitting Factory, the band's *Happy Hour* comes across as a Eurofied collage of American musics, ranging from psychedelic rock to minimalism, to giddily crazed free playing. "No Powells To The People" sounds like a Police outtake with drunken sample warblings from keyboardist Werner Klausnitzer. Thelonious Monk's loopy "Hackensack" is the only cover tune on the album, and the band gives it a knotty, twisted rendition with Gunnar Geisse playing the head on a clanky-prepared guitar. The prize here is "The Bill: Frisell And Free Dope (For Ivan Lendl)," a rambling suite of madness and melancholy that could be a statement-of-purpose.

Resembling the elastic, electric style-moshing of such artists as the old Everyman Band and Bill Frisell, Brother Virus abides by the idea that nothing is sacred/everything is sacred. Their joy lies in the bringing together of disparate ideas, and relishing the happy wreckage that results.  
 —Josef Woodard

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## Jack Bruce

**SOMETHIN' ELS**—CMP 1001: *WAITING ON A WORD; WILLPOWER; SHIPS IN THE NIGHT; PEACES OF THE EAST; CLOSE ENOUGH FOR LOVE; G.B. DAWN BLUES; CRIMINALITY; CHILDSONG; FM.* (41:09)

**Personnel:** Bruce, vocals, bass, keyboards, piano, drums, cello; Stuart Elliot, drums; Eric Clapton, lead guitar (1-3); Clem Clempson, rhythm guitar (2,5,6); Peter Weihe, rhythm guitar (1,3-5); Trilok Gurtu, percussion (1,5,6); David Liebman, soprano sax (7,8); Maggie Reilly, vocals (3,4); Bruce Fowler, trombone (2); Walt Fowler, trumpet (2); Gerd Dudek, tenor sax (2); Uli Lask, alto sax (2); Dick Heckstall-Smith, tenor, soprano saxes (6); Ray Gomez, guitar (7); Anton Fier, drums (7); Mark Nauseef, percussion (8).

★ ★ ★

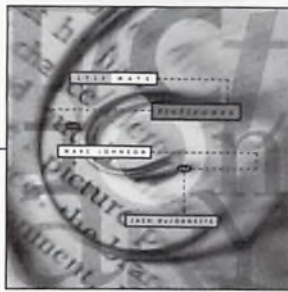
Bruce's latest collaboration with longtime writing partner Pete Brown—covering the period between 1986-'92—doesn't rock nearly as hard as his last solo effort, 1989's excellent *A Question Of Time* (Epic). But it does provide a more revealing glimpse into Cream's principal singer/songwriter. Basically, it reveals that at age 50, Bruce has more in common with Broadway's Mandy Patinkin than Willie Dixon, his boyhood blues hero.

Cream-mate Clapton makes a special guest appearance on three cuts. He offers his signature sweet-toned Strat licks on "Waiting For A Word," a bouncy little ditty reminiscent of the Doobie Brothers' "Listen To The Music." Clapton stings a bit harder on "Willpower," a bluesy number with Stax-type horns that comes off as Jack's answer to Albert King's "Born Under A Bad Sign," or maybe Al Green's "Take Me To The River." Eric also delivers a classic, passionate "While My Guitar Gently Weeps"-type solo on "Ships In The Night," a schmaltzy minor-key duet with Maggie Reilly.

The drum-synth programs on "Criminality" and "Peaces Of The East" sound cold and dated, while the brief "G.B. Dawn Blues" is stiff and plodding, though it does feature some urgent tenor honking from Bruce's old partner in the Graham Bond Organisation, saxophonist Dick Heckstall-Smith. Jack dips back into his Broadway wannabe bag on the overwrought "Close Enough For Love," and jazz saxophonist Dave Liebman plays like Wayne Shorter behind Jack's emotive vocals on the Latin-flavored ballad, "Childsong." And what Jack Bruce album would be complete without an unaccompanied Satie-influenced piano piece (the closer, "FM")?

Bruce reveals a lot on the very personal *Somethin' Els*, about half of which left me wanting to hear something else.

—Bill Milkowski



## Lyle Mays

**FICTIONARY**—Geffen 24521: *BILL EVANS; FICTIONARY; SIENNA; LINCOLN REVIEWS HIS NOTES; HARD EIGHTS; SOMETHING LEFT UNSAID; TRIO #1; WHERE ARE YOU FROM TODAY; FALLING GRACE; TRIO #2; ON THE OTHER HAND.* (65:33)

**Personnel:** Mays, piano; Marc Johnson, bass; Jack DeJohnette, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

His first acoustic trio outing—recorded one spring day, with no rehearsals—*Fictionary* celebrates Mays the epitomical jazz pianist. Whatever momentary tentativeness might be sensed in the cracks, as a whole, this is a fine, probing set of music. Apart from Steve Swallow's "Falling Grace," the album is composed of intriguing Mays originals. "Bill Evans," with changes and attitude cocking an ear toward "Blue In Green," kicks off a set that's pensive but never brooding, lyrical but never gauzy.

—Josef Woodard



## Borah Bergman

**THE HUMAN FACTOR**—Soul Note 121212: *THE HUMAN FACTOR; CHASIN' THE TRAIN I; RED SHADOWS; DEVIL'S DOUBLE; WHEN AUTUMN COMES; CHASIN' THE TRAIN II; THE HUMAN FACTOR—REPRISE.* (60:45)

**Personnel:** Borah Bergman, piano; Andrew Cyrille, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

Bergman pushes the piano to intense limits, working up a volcanic, post-free-jazz musical force in this duet setting. But Bergman, whose connection to Cecil Taylor is unabashed, allows for rumination amidst the maelstrom: "Red Shadows" is a skewed reverie befitting the title's imagery. The melody to both versions of Coltrane's "Chasin' The Train (sic)"—the only cover tune here—is immersed in knotty bursts of notes that seem to implode into being. Cyrille's drumming, subtle and quietly insistent rather than bashing, proves to be the ideal foil for Bergman's sonic-action painting approach.

—J. W.



## Bob Berg

**ENTER THE SPIRIT**—Stretch 1105: *SECOND SIGHT; SNAPSHOT; PROMISE; NATURE OF THE BEAST; SOMETIME AGO; NO MOE; NIGHT MOVES; BLUES FOR BELA; I LOVES YOU PORGY; ANGLES.*

**Personnel:** Berg, tenor, soprano saxes; Chick Corea (2,8,9), David Kikoski (3,4,5,7,10), Jim Beard (3,7), keyboards; James Genus, bass; Dennis Chambers, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

Berg's first for Chick Corea's Stretch label drives down the middle of the jazz ethos and validates his artistry in a way that his previous, more pop-jazz-inclined album didn't. Widely and wisely versed, Berg can breathe fire ("Blues For Bela," Corea's "Snapshot"), smoke rings ("Sometime Ago"), or wry rubber (Sonny Rollins' "No Moe"). On this, Berg's best solo effort yet, he enters the spirit swinging. —J. W.

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## The Awkward Age (II)

by Kevin Whitehead

**W**hen we last looked in on reissue czar Robert Parker's early-jazz series for Australian Broadcasting, by the late '20s, some Midwesterners were swinging, some still struggling. In New York, same deal (see "Reviews" Apr. '93).

**Clarence Williams** (ABC 836 829; 49:16; ★★★★★) surveys the pianist/songwriter's career from 1927 to '34, when his bands might include blues singer Eva Taylor, clarinetist Buster Bailey, pianists Willie the Lion Smith or James P. Johnson. *Auteur* Clarence doesn't appear on all his own sides, but stamps them anyway with his commercial instincts: blues, jug music, an Ellingtonian dirge, Calloway jive; he'd try whatever might sell, and had the knack. Williams' music is bluesy and spirited, hurtling if not always swinging exactly, enlivened with gutbucket growling from cornetists Ed Allen or Louis Metcalf. Some folks see Williams as just a glorified song-plugger; never underestimate how extra-musical factors push certain figures forward (and back) in every period.

Cornetist **Red Nichols** was dismissed for ages as a Beiderbecke imitator and non-improviser who worked out solos in advance. Then opinion-maker Gunther Schuller sung his (and trombonist **Miff Mole's**) praises in *The*



Bob Crosby (center, dark suit) and band, 1939: retro pioneers swing effortlessly, knowingly

*Swing Era* (Oxford). Several performances Schuller hails are on *Red Nichols And Miff Mole* (836 185; 47:15; ★★★★★½), by various groups through 1930. We're with the professor on this. Red's two-beat rhythm has a jauntiness that wears well—the Charleston Chasers' 1927 "Someday Sweetheart" boasts uncommon rhythmic relaxation. And Nichols—having been exposed to sophisticated harmonic effects with Russ Gorman in 1925 ("Rhythm Of The Day")—rips out supple runs. Sometimes it's almost as if Nichols and company poke fun at the "New York style" they personify: metaphor? The music was becoming self-conscious.

As in every evolutionary process where choices are many, not every mutation suc-

ceeds. On *British Dance Bands* (836 045; 46:32; ★★★★★)—Ray Noble, Jack Hylton and the Ambrose Orchestra are *best* known here—most tracks chug along with a "businessman's bounce" that isn't quite jazz, but wouldn't exist without it: a sign of black America's cultural conquest of Europe, and evidence other cultures put jazz to its own uses, just as jazz appropriates instruments and ideas from all over. But the unsettling use of the word "nigger" on an otherwise innocuous Syd Lipton tune points up how little some musicians regard their sources. **Al Bowly With Ray Noble 1931 To 1934** (836 170; 49:44; ★★) features the English crooner touted by vocal expert Will Friedwald. Sometimes the playing's marginally hipper than on the above, but Bowly sounds stuck on a London music-hall stage; he's got all the jazz feel of Neil Sedaka.

*Swing—Groups 1931 To 1936* (836 047; 47:19; ★★★★★) documents the small units, white and black, which existed alongside the big bands: Goodman and his circle, Waller and Basie, Wingy Manone and Mezz Mezzrow. Miraculously, after years of sometimes painful transition, 4/4 swing became natural. Immerse yourself in these fine, limber sides, and you'll realize bop arose from what came before as much as it broke with it.

By the time **Bob Crosby 1937-1938** (838 477; 55:09; ★★★★★) was waxed, swing, once so elusive, had become effortless even for his band of retro pioneers. Crosby's co-op revived boogie-woogie piano and the New Orleans ensemble style before either genre went through its big revival. They treat their sources with confident freedom, enough at home swinging in 4/4 to kid around in 2/4. (And "Big Noise From Winnetka"'s whistling and drumming on bass strings surely looks ahead to AACM restructuring.) Jazz's growing pains were well behind; players had become knowingly historical.

New Orleans classicism came back into vogue in the '40s, but **Sidney Bechet** had never quit it. *Sidney Bechet* (838 032; 48:41; ★★★★★½), which concentrates on the '30s, demonstrates the clarinetist and soprano saxophonist had been soaring all along, sticking to his path while lesser figures pursued one money fad after another. Bop would usher in the cult of the soloist, but Bechet, through the power of his sound and swing, had always dominated his bands. Moral: If you sit on the outside long enough, fashion will come find you. (Distributed by DRG.)

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## Ducal Stockpile

by Jack Sohmer

**A**mong the myriad treasures that comprise the recorded works of Duke Ellington are the countless concerts, broadcasts, transcriptions, and private "stockpile" tapes that continue to appear every year. *Duke Ellington & His World Famous Orchestra* (Hindsight HBCD 501: 68:56/66:44/68:37:★★★★★), a three-disc, 64-track boxed set of immaculately recorded radio transcriptions, is the latest such release to hit the market. Although new to CD, this collection was first issued on five Hindsight LPs some years back, and, as such, may very well be familiar to older collectors, but not with the improvements so evident in this digitally remastered version.

By the time these seven sessions were recorded (March 1946 to June 1947), the band's personnel had changed markedly from that of its greatest period, 1940-'42. Gone, of course, were Coolie Williams, Rex Stewart, Barney Bigard, Ben Webster, and Jimmy Blanton, but still present to maintain the patented Ellington sound were Ray Nance, Lawrence Brown, Tricky Sam Nanton, Johnny Hodges, Harry Carney, and Sonny Greer. And there were also the newer stars: Jimmy Hamilton, Bigard's ultimate successor on clarinet and tenor, trumpeters Taft Jordan, Shorty Baker, and Cat Anderson, tenorman Al Sears, and bassist Oscar Pettiford, whose Blanton-inspired technique is prominently featured on "Suddenly It Jumped," "Moon Mist," "Happy Go Lucky Local," "Swamp Fire," and especially "Tip Toe Topic," a trio number in its only known performance.

Carney's sumptuous baritone sound is showcased on his specialties, "Sono" and "Frustration," as well as "Jam A Ditty," while Hodges exercises his authority on "Passion Flower," "Jeep Is Jumpin'," "A Flower Is A Lovable Thing," and "Far Away Blues," as well as many other titles. Brown is heard from almost as frequently, but Nanton, who was to die within four days, recorded his last solo on "The Mooche." All of the trumpeters receive ample solo space, as do Sears and the even-then impeccable Hamilton. Of additional interest are the eight compositions never recorded for commercial release.

The man who created Hindsight was the late Wally Heider, recording engineer and lifelong Ellington enthusiast; and it was also he who recorded two complete nights of the Ellington band on their annual engagements at McElroy's Ballroom in Portland, Oregon, material which is now being debuted in *Happy Birthday Duke!* April 29th Birthday Sessions, Vols. 1-5 (LaserLight 15-965; 42:05/46:38/47:15/38:52/38:59:★★★★★). The first three volumes document the events of that night in 1953, while the last two, perhaps with some editing, cover the following year's festivities. Heider's live pickups are famed for their realistic sound, an accomplishment all the more admirable in light of the limited recording technology of that time. But what is truly unusual about these performances is that Duke keeps his amiable banter to a minimum and concentrates more on playing.

The personnel was remarkably stable for that volatile time in big-band history: all four 1953



Ellington: the music keeps on rolling

trumpeters—Willie Cook, Clark Terry, Cat Anderson, and Ray Nance—were still on board the following year, as were the sax section of Russell Procope, Rick Henderson, Paul Gonsalves, Jimmy Hamilton, and Harry Carney, trombonists Britt Woodman and Quentin Jackson, and vocalist Jimmy Grissom. Duke himself plays marvelously on "Liza," "Creole Love Call," and "Stomp, Look And Listen!," which also spotlights Nance, Hamilton, and Woodman. Thankfully, it is Gonsalves who plummets the depths of the Hodges specialty, "Warm Valley," since Henderson, whose bop style, as displayed on "All The Things You Are," shows such little affinity for the sensuous, bluesy approach so essential to the Hodges book. Other highlights include Cook's swinging "Tenderly" and his solo on "Jam With Sam," Woodman's "Sultry Sunset," Procope's warm clarinet on "Mood Indigo," Jackson's plunger muted moanings on "Johnny Come Lately," the extended Gonsalves turns on "Things Ain't What They Used To Be" and "Take The 'A' Train," Carney on "V.I.P. Boogie," Hamilton on "Honeysuckle Rose," and Nance—on trumpet, violin, and vocals—all over the place. Although annotator Stanley Dance writes kindly about balladeer Grissom, I find his undisciplined, tortured blues singing as inappropriate to the band as Henderson's misplaced Bird licks.

*The Symphonic Ellington* (Discovery 71003; 41:39:★★★★) involves a now-fully stabilized 1963 personnel plus, in Dance's words, "some 500 of the best talents from the symphonic resources of Paris, Hamburg, Stockholm and Milan." The program consists of "Night Creature," a three-part piece written in 1955, 1949's "Non-Violent Integration," 1950's "Harlem Air Shaft," and 1963's hastily composed, solo-based blues, "La Scala, She Too Pretty To Be Blue." Jazz solos do abound, what with the now-retired Hodges and Cootie as well as the other regulars. *Afro-Bossa* (Discovery 71002; 36:38:★★★★) also made its first appearance on a 1963 Reprise LP, but unlike the more Euro-based aspirations of the former, the pieces collected for this album seem to be politically generated responses to the then-burgeoning African-heritage movement. Jelly Roll Morton notwithstanding, Duke was demonstrably the first composer to employ exotic melodies and harmonies in jazz, but in the early years he had used these devices sparingly and to judicious effect. Here, however, he goes overboard in his enthusiasm for the globally ethnic. A few of the titles should suffice to convey the flavor: "Purple Gazelle," "Tigriss," "Angu," "Volupté," "Bonga," "Pyramid," and "Eighth Veil." **DB**



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# Paul Bley

"Right now, everybody is trying to take in all the past schools of jazz. I think most of the young jazzmen today are listening hard to the schools of the past. They're trying to select the best features of each of them and assimilate them into their own playing. For instance, I have tapes of records by Louis, Roy, Blanton, Christian, Lester, and a lot of others. We carry them around with us and play them whenever we get the chance.

"I think a lot of other musicians are doing the same thing. It's a natural cycle, the cycle that's evident in the history of classical music over the last 500 years. First a period of radical change, when all the leaders and their followers reject everything that's gone before—just as in the bop days. Then a long period of assimilation, followed by another great change.

"After listening to so much old jazz during the past year, I think I'm finally able to put to use some of what I learned about composition in the years at Juilliard. I think I understand my medium a lot better.

"Now I'm anxious to do some writing. I'd like to write in longer forms, of course—62-bar compositions, perhaps. I'd like to work with superimposed harmonies and try to write music without a chordal center. I'm also interested in using the pre-Bach forms—the type of thing that 20th century composers are beginning to discover only now."

[Paul Bley, DB July 13, '56]



Lester Young with the Paul Bley Trio (bassist Jimmy Corbet and drummer Al Levitt) at the Loop Lounge in Cleveland.

## 1 Johnny Hodges

"Jeep's Blues" (from *JOHNNY HODGES & ALL THE DUKE'S MEN*, Verve) Hodges, composer, alto sax (rec. 1958).

That's "Jeep's Blues" by Johnny Hodges, one of my influences, as I grew older, and probably the most beautiful, sensuous alto sound in the world of jazz. He's one of the hardest alto players to imitate, because most of his thing was sound. I didn't get into him deeply until eight years ago, when I did that project *The Year Of The Rabbit* [New Note]. Even before that, people thought I was influenced by him, but I've always been conscious of trying to bring out the sound of the alto. And there are definitely elements of his sound that are just timeless. I feel that every alto saxophone player should have that sound; so I use him for certain elements at different times, especially in ballads, and sometimes in blues like this one. 5 stars, or one star for every year of his life.

## 2 Antonio Hart

"Zero Grade Reliance" (from *DON'T YOU KNOW I CARE*, Novus) Hart, composer, alto sax; Greg Hutchinson, drums; Rodney Whitaker, bass.

My first guess is Kenny Garrett. Steve Wilson? Then it's Antonio Hart. I think this is probably one of his compositions. And that must be Greg Hutchinson. Is Chris McBride on there? I don't hear anything distinctive from the rhythm section. They're very competent, but very few piano players and bass players have a touch on the instrument where they identify themselves. But it's very good, and Antonio is another one of my buddies. He calls me Mr. Watson. If I can just stop him from doing that, it would be cool. But he has extreme respect for the guys that came before him in the music. I think that at his stage right now he's still searching. This is an art form, and it takes time to find yourself and be able to identify yourself, which, to me, is the most important thing in this music. Like Art Blakey said, there's no substitute for experience. But it's very well done, so I give him 3½ stars, just because of the respect and the craft that he's shown.

## 3 Steve Coleman

"Slipped Again" (from *RHYTHM IN MIND*, Novus) Coleman, alto sax; Kenny Wheeler, trumpet; Tommy Flanagan, piano; Dave Holland, bass; Marvin "Smitty" Smith, drums.

Steve Coleman. Me and Steve used to hang out a lot and play Bird tunes all day long. I know his sound. He's very influenced by Bunky Green. The drummer sounds a lit-

## by Larry Birnbaum

**A** member of jazz's "lost" generation—caught between old masters and young lions—alto saxophonist Bobby Watson's bright, hard tone and eely-smooth phrasing (suggesting comparisons with Cannonball Adderley and Johnny Hodges) has finally brought him wider attention. With his own quintet, Horizon, he's recorded three soul-spiced sessions for Blue Note, followed by two for Columbia, the latest of which, *Tailor Made*, is a lush, Latin-tinged big-band date featuring members of Horizon, the 29th Street Saxophone Quartet, and other past and present Watson associates. He also plays on *Pride Of Lions* (Sony Masterworks), featuring works by Chopin and Debussy.



This was his first Blindfold Test.

tle bit like Smitty Smith. That's Kenny Wheeler. I recognize his vibrato; he's got this bitter-sweet thing. The piano reminds me of Hank Jones. He's got that kind of touch, like an older cat. Is it Tommy Flanagan? I can only guess who the bass player is. Is it Dave Holland? Everybody is playing their thing in a certain context, so I have to give credit for that. They're not really in their natural element, but they pulled it off, and I enjoyed it, so I have to give it 5 stars. They're all masters, coming up.

## 4 Christopher Hollyday

"Memories Of You" (from *ON COURSE*, Novus) Hollyday, alto sax; Eubie Blake, composer.

That's Eubie Blake's tune, "Memories Of You." I hear him changing the notes after he attacks them, for some reason. He's not sitting on his notes. Is that Christopher Hollyday? I hear him changing his mind on notes, and he does that a lot—I hate to say it—because he's still not found himself. He'll hit a note the way he hears it, and then he'll change it and make it go out of tune, I guess on purpose. There's something a little contrived about that. He's got to do a little more soul searching, and trust himself. He hasn't found himself, yet. I give him 3 stars.

## 5 Art Porter

"Close To You" (from *POCKET CITY*, Verve Forecast) Porter, alto sax.

Sounds like Grover [Washington Jr.]. I hear a lot of Grover in him. If he got a hit, I'm happy for him, because so many cats try to do a record like this, and it don't go nowhere. He

sounds sincere; I don't feel it's a jazz cat trying to do this just to make some money. But I wouldn't do it. I did some of that stuff on my first record and realized I'll never do it again, because it confuses your audience. If that's what he wants to do, more power to him. Man, I know this guy. I just can't think of his name.

LB: Art Porter.

Yeah, he's from Chicago. I've met Art Porter. He reminds me a lot of myself—the way he moves on stage, and his approach to the music. If I was going to play this kind of music, I'd do it the same way, so I give him 5 stars. To me, the most important thing is sincerity, and being able to identify yourself. He can play jazz, too, and he runs changes in his stuff, which I like. He made the choice to go this way, and I think he'll have a hard time coming back to straight-ahead jazz; but I saw him this summer, and I thoroughly enjoyed his presentation.

## 6 Paul Desmond

"Just Squeeze Me" (from *LIKE SOMEONE IN LOVE*, Telarchive) Desmond, alto sax; Ed Bickert, guitar.

Paul Desmond. "Just Squeeze Me." Is that Jim Hall on guitar? You can't be an alto player without knowing Paul Desmond. For him, 5 stars. There are schools of thought, you know. They say he plays it more like a woodwind instrument than a brass instrument; but I disagree. It's just that he found a different color. I like Paul because he's very logical, very melodic, and you can also hear the swing elements in his playing. The swing cats had a certain thing about melody. He had the blues in his playing, and you hear him thinking on the horn. What more could you want? 5 stars.

DB