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Toots Thielemans

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Triple-Crown Winner Joe Henderson

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Jazz REBELS

Lester Bowie & Greg Osby

You've got to have several irons in the fire," Lester Bowie told Greg Osby years ago, "and my irons are my different bands." The trumpeter with the all-star sextet the Leaders and with the Art Ensemble of Chicago—touring this year with bluesmen or chamber orchestra added—also leads the funky Brass Fantasy (still playing Michael Jackson covers) and Organ Ensemble, and last year recorded six tracks with pop star David Bowie ("A nice cat, straightahead, and professional"). Lester's life is good; we met at his big, airy home in Brooklyn's Clinton Hill, where he's lived 14 years. During our session, Bowie smoked a fine Cuban cigar Bill Cosby gave him—these days he's also cultivating a Cosbysque mumble—and freely needled a certain trumpet-playing nemesis.

Like Bowie, alto and soprano saxophonist Greg Osby came up in St. Louis, but his manner is more subdued; he chooses his words more carefully. He too has his many irons, however, at a time when conservatives want to drum free-thinkers like him and Lester out of jazz. Osby and buddy Steve Coleman have started two record labels, Rebel-X and Funk Mob. Two recent Osby albums suggest his range: *3-D Lifestyles* (see "Reviews" July '93), a jazz musician's rap record hip enough for hip-hoppers, and Strata Institute's *Transmigration* (DIW/Columbia), where Greg, Coleman, and Von Freeman jam on Mancini and James Moody tunes ("Reviews" May '93). A personification of '80s jazz's Brooklyn rebels, Osby now lives outside Philadelphia.

The musicians set the direction of their conversation with little interference from me. Some opinions expressed will raise controversy. For example, other musicians hold similar views about Wynton Marsalis' stewardship of Jazz at Lincoln Center, and the frosty ways Young Lions deal with more liberal musicians; they just don't discuss them on the record. Self-sufficiency frees Bowie and Osby to say what they please. They have nothing to lose.

GREG OSBY: I got the call to play with Lester Bowie's big band when I first came to town [in 1983]. Lester is one of the cats that inspired me to pursue an individual voice in the music. I was playing with Jon Faddis at the time, and the whole direction of that was what [Hamiet] Bluiett calls "Model-T Music." Playing with Lester's group—and close inspection of his history—showed me that his approach was more appealing than continuing to regurgitate everybody else's ideas.

When me and Steve Coleman started M-BASE, it was a bunch of people getting together and talking, but we didn't have anything established. Lester would say, "So what is that? Whatchyall gonna do for yourselves?" [*weakly*] "We'll try . . . We're gonna do. . . ." He said, "I got all this stuff set up, I can play with this band, that band, Brass Fantasy, the Leaders." That struck a chord: You could create a workbase, diversify your skills, using the same core of people—an umbrella structure, like the AACM combined with George Clinton's Parliament-Funkadelic. As opposed to working with the same group all the time, putting out the same kind of records. That's the most boring pursuit I could ever imagine. Because not only are you uninspired, but your audience can anticipate what your stuff is gonna sound like.

LESTER BOWIE: When you're not really into the music, you get bored, and you transmit that boredom quick. It comes out your horn. Cats who confine themselves to one area, they're limiting themselves. They think they're playing, and they ain't playing.

GO: They stunt their growth. I grew so fast when I had a chance to sub with the World Saxophone Quartet, and play with Craig Harris, Julius Hemphill, David Murray's big band and octet. That was a lot more challenging than playing some show tunes.

LB: Jazz is so difficult. A lot of people think once they've learned these licks they can get up and play them for the rest of their life. But that's not being truthful to the music 'cause it's not developing. Cats you hear that don't make no mistakes? They ain't trying to do nothing. Everything they hear is on the mark, but they've played it so many times.

GO: The beauty of it is regrouping from a mistake. Some of the baddest stuff that's been thought was accidental.

LB: That's right. So I've built a whole career out of making mistakes!

KEVIN WHITEHEAD: *Greg, isn't it arrogant to project your own style before proving you've mastered the styles of past giants?*

GO: See, that's where the confusion is. Because these people that we hold in so much esteem were inventors in their own time. Charlie Parker didn't make his mark by continuing to sound like Lester Young. Without your own sound, you couldn't even hang out!

LB: That used to be a thing. You could be good, but even local cats wouldn't regard you as hip unless you had your own personal phrasing and sound. That was a prerequisite. Now they try to turn it

By Kevin Whitehead



ENID FARBER

"I consider what I'm doing, what Lester's been doing, to be truer to jazz's historical motive than playing works reminiscent of other times, another climate."

inside out, make the least developed the most developed. You do have to go through the music of the past, to learn how to play; but once you do that, that's it. Because jazz is not some academic exercise.

When Wynton got out there I couldn't believe it. He's supposed to be the **Down Beat**, hip, jazz, Leonard Feather-type motherf**ker. Here's this cat, obviously, obviously—everybody *knows* this cat ain't got it. But they keep on pressing: [*scholarly voice*] "He's got the technique, and any day he's gonna come up with this astounding new development. . . ." Believe me, it ain't gonna happen. How long did it take Lee Morgan to play something of his own, or Clifford [Brown], or Booker Little? Wynton's a good musician, but he's been totally miscast. No way in the world is he the King of Jazz, the King of Trumpet.

KW: Are you saying he doesn't have a great and moving command of what Rex Stewart and Cootie Williams were doing?

LB: He's not that kind of a cat, that's what I'm saying. You can't feel an emotional attachment because he's not playing *him*. But he can be the King of the *Classical* Trumpet Players, because of his knowledge of jazz and harmony, because [*laughing*] there's no way that he can express himself. He could completely revolutionize classical trumpet without a doubt. Get classical musicians to improvise, the way they used to. Then he'd be somebody I could respect.

KW: Wynton has a big job at Lincoln Center, they give him \$20,000 commissions, he writes these long suites that are glowingly reviewed in the national press. How can you say he doesn't have it?

LB: He's got the money. But I feel sorry for him.

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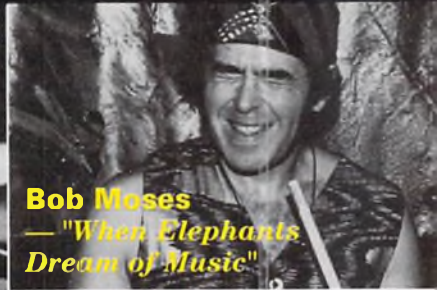


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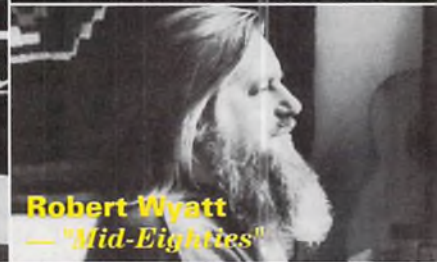
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GO: This isn't a tirade against him or the institution he represents or anything like that. These are just observations. When things are misappropriated, I have to address it myself. He's a good brother, he's cool, and everything; but his dogma, his rantings, some of those things are unforgivable.

LB: Why is it that these sorts of responsibilities are pressed on a negative person? He even accused Miles [Davis] of treason. Because Miles played a Cyndi Lauper tune ["Time After Time"]? In the '50s, "Surrey With The Fringe On Top" was on the Hit Parade. That's part of the thing, to be contemporary, to express yourself. Wynton's trying to tamper with the music's development, and I see some kind of evil overlay on that.

GO: Unwittingly, people like that become a pawn, they become an agent for those who would like to suppress creative intent.

KW: Greg, Jon Faddis, and Red Rodney already did the rap thing. So why are you jumping on the bandwagon now?

GO: No, they haven't done the rap thing. I lived in Brooklyn for most of 10 years, I've collaborated with a lot of the rap artists. You can't just jump on that bandwagon and expect to [laughs at the prospect] enhance that sensibility. This is a project that I've wanted to do for some time. It's only currently that I've gotten the support and financial backing. I met a lot of resistance, up until I delivered something tangible.

LB: That's what I like about what Greg is doing—he's into the vibe, the rhythms of what's going on out here now. Playing "Bye Bye Blackbird" or sounding like Duke Ellington, that's got nothing to do with where we're coming from. That's the foundation, we got to do the rest of the house. With jazz, it's not so much what you play as



ROBERT NIES

"Love to see Jazz at Lincoln Center—it should have been there years ago. ... [But] we're not gonna sacrifice the music to get into the concert hall."

how you play it. It's not something you put into the repertoire, it's a living, breathing, young, baby music.

KW: [mock-exasperated] "Jazz is America's classical music." We have to put it into the concert hall to get respect.

LB: I agree with you. Love to see Jazz at Lincoln Center—it should have been there years ago. Every city should have a jazz orchestra with a budget equal to the philharmonic's. But don't negate the other

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things that are happening, don't stunt the growth of the music. We're not gonna sacrifice the music to get into the concert hall.

GO: These people have to expand their tolerance of other branches in the tree. These are all facets coming from the same root source. I consider what I'm doing, what Lester's been doing, to be truer to jazz's historical motive than playing works reminiscent of other times, another climate.

LB: I think Americans are ready for some jazz now, seriously. They're so bored, they haven't heard the music in so long. On tour with the Leaders, the first 30 minutes of every concert would be totally improvised, really advanced, and it was accepted well: "Good! Yeah! It's here! At last! Something different!" So [cultural institutions] should fund our composers, too: Anthony Braxton, Muhal [Richard Abrams], Roscoe [Mitchell], those AACM cats were writing some advanced things years ago.

GO: Seriously, seriously.

LB: It's not a simple music anymore. So it does belong in the concert hall. But it also belongs in the street, on the farm, it needs equal access everywhere, the same as country & western, rap, anything. Because jazz is all of these. Cat's sitting back scared, "I won't play in that rhythm, I don't play country & western. That ain't jazz." I say, later for them. Jazz is hip-hop, dixieland, anything the people playing it want it to be. "Man, don't listen to that Argentinean shit, it might influence you." C'mon, baby! Influence me!

If it wasn't for Greg and [Organ Ensemble saxophonist] James Carter, I'd damn near have given up hope. I thought all the young cats were turning posers and shit. Developing this music is not about how much technique you have. No one has given Don Cherry his creative due. He's not a great trumpet technician, but he is one hell of a musician. He loosened all of us up, set us free.

Americans often look for the easy way out, and they get misinformation. These young guys don't know any better. They've just been to school, and they don't really have an idea what it's like out here yet. It's not just learning some songs; we have to learn how to live and exchange information as people. "Man, how do you do this? I need some help with this, give me some advice." So we can survive in the industry. I got about 30 musicians in my employ. Nobody's getting rich, but everybody makes damn near enough to pay their rent for that year. And I tell them this has got to be just one of their projects, so everybody in the band's got three or four bands. We keep working, and we look out for each other.

GO: I've talked to Lester only two or three times about the business of music and the business of self-promotion, but those were some of the key conversations of my career, that catapulted me to the next level. A lot of the older cats were reluctant to share any insight with me at all. I guess they figured, "He just rolled into town and is touring the world with Jon Faddis. You haven't paid your dues," whatever dues are. A due is whatever you do. Do what you wanna do.

LB: Dues is just life: love, tragedy, happiness. It's not about how long you've lived, it's about the emotional attachment.

GO: It's sad when somebody who classifies themselves as a creative artist doesn't allow everyday occurrences and new alliances to influence their music. There's a lot of people who experience a lot of things—tragedy, triumph, all this kind of stuff—that their documented works don't reflect.

LB: We got to get the music back to when musicians had a ball playing music, hanging out, and talking. Now we got cats looking funny at each other. When I was coming up, I got to hang out with some great cats, who treated me like a brother: Blue Mitchell, Lou Donaldson, Tommy Turrentine, Kenny Dorham, Marcus Belgrave, Johnny Coles. They weren't looking at me funny, they were telling me the truth. Cats who act halfway funny ain't nearly on that level.

GO: When I came to town, I was going out to the clubs, trying to find out who the cats were who were dealing, my supposed peer group. And I got a lot of resistance. I'd come up to cats I knew from

Berklee or Howard on the gig: "Hey, that's some nice stuff you're doing man, what's happening?" "Aw man, that's just some stuff I'm trying to hear, y'know?" The brush-off. "Man, I'm kind of busy now."

When you talk to young people, you have to tell them that. A lot of people attend these lectures at schools and colleges: "Come to New York, blah blah," and they build it up into this grandiose . . .

KW: *I'm gonna bring my horn down to the Vanguard and sit in . . .*

GO: . . . and get a contract. They're like that!

LB: Realistically, you have to develop your network. That involves a lot of things. It involves going places. Say you go to Paris, go over and make some noise for awhile; you come back here, now you got two places to play. Go to a third place, a fourth place. you start developing your audience. Regardless of whether you get a review in *Down Beat*, they're gonna want to hear what you sound like, year in and year out.

KW: *And if you stop performing up to your standard, the word's gonna get around.*

LB: Yeah, but then people will pay to see what you've deteriorated to!

KW: *Do you feel sympathy for younger musicians who think they have to do things in a certain way, that they don't have many options?*

LB: I feel so sorry for them boys. Some of them are ruining their careers. Like poor [Wallace] Roney. He's a good musician, he can play, but he pretends he's Miles reincarnated or something. He's got to look like him. There was a time I wanted to be like Miles, too—that was part of being hip. But you don't keep on doing it for the rest of your life.

KW: *Besides James Carter, are there any young players you're encouraged by?*

LB: [to microphone, with cupped hands] "Nicholas Payton! I want you to be a man! Don't listen to all that bullshit, just continue to develop yourself! Don't let nobody tell you to stop, or you're great, or you're not that hip. Please!"

KW: *Greg, any younger players you'd single out?*

GO: Joshua Redman. He's pretty open-minded, as long as he doesn't let his big contract and all the attention infest his mind. Ravi Coltrane, he just needs to be a little more assertive. Antoine Roney, Wallace's brother.

LB: Plays saxophone? He don't look like Wayne Shorter does he?

DB

EQUIPMENT

Greg Osby: "You can just say Greg Osby declines to endorse any products 'cause he's had to buy his own shit. I see these guys who've got [free] horns all over the place getting dusty, they don't play this stuff. I've been trying to get endorsements for years, man; they've just been egging me."

Lester Bowie: [laughing] "They've egged me so bad I think no company wants to be responsible for the way I sound! Put down the same thing for me. I don't want to endorse nobody's shit. People know where I play, and the cats know what I play; so if somebody wants to find out they can ask one of them."

What if some kid out in Topeka thinks Greg Osby has such a beautiful tone. I wonder what mouthpiece and reed he uses?

"That's fine. My management information is on all my products. So buy the record, get in touch with them, and I'll respond. But we need to put that bulletin out, that they're giving too much stuff to the wrong cats. 'Cause I got a studio full of equipment—racks and racks of electronic stuff, synthesizers, four computers—and I paid for it all."

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

<p>Greg Osby (For additional listings, see <i>DB</i> Oct. '89.)</p> <p>3-D LIFESTYLES—Blue Note 98635 MAN TALK FOR MODERNS VOL. X—Blue Note 95414 ANATOMY OF A GROOVE—DIW/Columbia 54331 (w/M-BASE Collective) TRANSMIGRATION—DIW/Columbia 53432 (Strata Institute) MIND GAMES—JMT 834 422-2</p>	<p>Lester Bowie (For additional listings, see <i>DB</i> Aug. '91.)</p> <p>THE FIRE THIS TIME—In + Out 7019 (Brass Fantasy) AMERICA-SOUTH AFRICA—DIW/Columbia 52954 (Art Ensemble of Soweto) THE LONIOUS SPHERE MONK (DREAMING OF THE MASTERS VOL. 2)—DIW/Columbia 48962 (Art Ensemble of Chicago with Cecil Taylor) BLACK TIE WHITE NOISE—Savage 74785-50212 (David Bowie)</p>
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The Harmonicat

TOOTS THIELEMANS

By Michael Bourne



Harmonicat!" That sounds like *le mot juste*, the right word for Toots Thielemans. There's really no word for a harmonica player like a trumpet player is a trumpeter or a saxophone player is a saxophonist.

"Harmonicist" sounds like a New Age shrink.

"Mouth Organist" sounds . . . unpleasant.

So, a jazzful neologism for Webster's: "Harmonicat, noun. 1. Toots Thielemans. 2. anyone else who plays the harmonica but knows that Toots Thielemans is #1."

Down Beat calls him a "miscellaneous instrumentalist"—and the best (see p. 32). He's out-poled tuba and cello and other miscellaneous players year after year. He's also an extraordinary guitarist and whistler.

Quincy Jones calls him "Stink."

"That's because I can play funky," says Toots.

Jean Baptiste Thielemans—pronounced "Theel-muns" if you're American, "Tee-le-mahns" if you're Belgian—was born in Brussels in 1922 and became an American citizen in 1958. But, really, Toots is a citizen of the world, of the road, of jazz—and his sound is universal, of the heart.

He's played harmonica and whistled on countless albums and soundtracks and commercials. He's been a guest soloist with everyone from Pat Metheny to Paul Simon, Billy Joel to Ella Fitzgerald, a presence melodically in movies like *Midnight Cowboy*, *Sugarland Express*, *The Getaway*, and a variety of projects with Quincy Jones, plus playing the theme to *Sesame Street*—and not to forget whistling for Firestone, Singer,

Dogburgers, and especially Old Spice.

He's also a composer—and if not prolific, as Tracy said of Hepburn, what's there is *cherce*.

"Bluesette" alone earns him a living. It's been recorded by more than a hundred artists. "I was playing a concert with Stephane Grappelli in Brussels in 1962. I was in the same dressing room with Stephane and I was tuning my guitar and somehow this little song came out. I was humming it, and Stephane said, 'That's nice. What is it?' I just said he inspired me, but he said, '*Ecrivez tout de suite!* Write it down right away!' I called it 'Bluette' for this little blue flower in Belgium, but when I played it on a show in Sweden, the producer said, 'Isn't that a blues? Why don't you put the 's' in there?' I owe the 's' to him."

"Ladyfingers" isn't as often recorded but earned him a house. It's one of the other songs on the Herb Alpert album *Whipped Cream And Other Delights*. Alpert's recording of the Bobby Scott song "A Taste Of Honey" became a mega-hit in 1964. "Bobby's song put the record on the charts. Bobby got more performance royalties but I got the same composer's royalties. They sold six million records. That's six-million cents! That paid for my house in Montauk."

Toots and his wife Huguette also have homes in Manhattan and Brussels—though they're more often on the road. It's a road and a life of many twists and turns.

It's fate that I became a musician. I studied math. I was supposed to become an engineer or professor. If it hadn't

been for jazz, I'd still be in Belgium."

Toots first played musette music on the accordion. "I knew about the harmonica from these movies before the war with [legendary harmonica player] Larry Adler playing light classical things. I didn't know about jazz when I bought my first harmonica." He became more interested in jazz listening with his friends to American swing records. Toots and his friends also jammed, and at dances, his friends (who'd named him "Toots" because "Jean didn't swing") encouraged him to play harmonica with the band. Toots at first played only in C, but the band played "Tea For Two" in A^b, so he learned A^b. And when the band played a blues in B^b, he learned B^b. "They saw that I was gifted and said I should get a *real* instrument!"

He came to the guitar—or, the guitar came to Toots—when he was sick and a friend visited with a black-market guitar. "We were listening to Fats Waller records like 'Hold Tight.' There's the quintessence of the jazz scale and everything you need in the blues in that song. I knew the song but I'd never touched a guitar. I said that if he'd give me five minutes, I'd play 'Hold Tight' on one string. I played it, and he gave me the guitar."

He studied music only briefly. He learned more from listening to Django Reinhardt records and jamming with other Belgian jazzers like saxophonist Bobby Jaspar and guitarist Rene Thomas. "I'm largely self-taught and learned the trade on the job. I learned reading on the job." Soon after the war he was on the job as an accompanist to Edith Piaf, Charles Trenet, and other headliners playing through Brussels. He eventu-

ally became a cabaret artist himself, even a comedian, even telling jokes in *Swedish*—but, as Toots says, “the center of gravity in my music and my life is playing jazz.”

What flabbergasted him was that within only a year after settling in New York in 1951, Toots was playing jazz with his idols, Benny Goodman and Charlie Parker. He'd jammed with Bird while in Sweden, and on one memorable week of 1952 joined Bird's all-stars at the Earle Theatre in Philadelphia. “We were second on the bill to Dinah Washington. Charlie Parker, Miles Davis, Milt Jackson, and Dinah's rhythm section with Jimmy Cobb, Keter Betts, and the lady Beryl Booker. I remember my

feature was ‘After You've Gone’ with Miles Davis and Charlie Parker playing riffs behind me. That was *oooooh* . . .”

He happened into a regular gig with George Shearing throughout the '50s. It was during those years that Toots became friends with Bill Evans and Quincy Jones, both beginners then. Toots eventually recorded some of his favorite work with them—the delightful 1978 album *Affinity* with Bill Evans, many albums and movies with Quincy Jones. Jaco Pastorius is another memorable musician he enjoyed working with, likewise Shirley Horn. “I call Shirley my favorite musical impact. Shirley the singer, the group, the piano, the voice.

All of these elements give me a smile and a tear.” Toots recently accompanied Shirley on her album *You Won't Forget Me*, and Shirley accompanied Toots recently on the album *For My Lady*. He's also pleased with a recent album of duets with pianist Martial Solal.

Toots became more and more popular in the studios throughout the '60s, usually playing harmonica as a featured sound and—especially after “Bluesette” became a hit in 1962—whistling. “That started just in fun. I'd always enjoyed whistling. I'd enjoyed Slam Stewart humming with the bow on the bass

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"WEE-WEE" WINNER

and thought I could do something parallel to that, so I whistled a note and played in unison an octave lower on the guitar. I put a little echo on the whistle and a nice velvety tone on the guitar." Soon he was whistling for Old Spice—"fresh as a breeze"—or playing what he calls a "wee-wee" on the harmonica.

"It's fate that I became a musician. I studied math. I was supposed to become an engineer or professor. If it hadn't been for jazz, I'd still be in Belgium."

"That's what I call overdubs. That comes from Quincy Jones. Bob James was touring with Quincy's band, and one night Quincy said, 'Bobby peed all over that song'—meaning Bobby played well. So now I call my little cameo parts just a little wee-wee against the tree." And in recent months he's peed—er, played—with, among others, Kim Pennsyl, Diane Schuur, Vanessa Williams, and on a collection of Beatles songs produced by Mike Mainieri.

What's delighted him most over the last year is *The Brasil Project*, encounters with a stellar gathering of Brazilian singers and players: Luiz Bonfá, Joao Bosco, Chico Buarque, Dori Caymmi, Djavan, Eliane Elias, Gilberto Gil, Ivan Lins, Edu Lobo,

Milton Nascimento, Ricardo Silveira, Caetano Veloso, and a rhythm section featuring guitarist Oscar Castro Neves, plus American friends like Lee Ritenour and Dave Grusin.

"It's more than a flirt what I feel for Brazilian music," says Toots with a sigh and a smile. "This idea came from Miles Goodman and Oscar Castro Neves. They said all these Brazilian guys love me. They all know an album I did in 1972 with Elis Regina. She was their Billie Holiday. It was a love affair in the studio. They each sang two songs for the project. Imagine the reverse, if a Brazilian harmonica player came to New York and wanted to record with Paul Simon, with Billy Joel, with Ray Charles, with Stevie Wonder and Bobby McFerrin. That's their stature in Brazil."

And, naturally, along came "Bluesette"—dancing a samba. "That was my idea. As we were doing the record I said it was more and more like a party at my house; and I said, like at a party, when they're saying, 'good night,' each of them could sing a little 'Bluesette.' Oscar Castro Neves laid down a track and with the loops they each sing. Ivan Lins wrote beautiful Portuguese lyrics about hearing 'Bluesette' when he was 17. Chico Buarque sings the English version. And the others scattered."

Private Music has also released a second volume of *The Brasil Project* with plenty more highlights and hits, including Nascimento's "Travessia," Veloso's "Linda," Luiz Bonfá playing "Samba de Orfeu," and Eliane Elias playing two Jobim classics. And through it all, resounding through the reeds of his Hohner, so lyrical, so soulful, is the unique voice of Toots Thielemans.

"Harmonical!"

DB

EQUIPMENT

"I carry my own old Shure microphone, an SM-58. I bring it because I want to be sure. I use it always. It travels with me. It's my buddy. The harmonica is made by Hohner to my likes and specifications. They make a model called Toots' Mellow Tone. It's a chromatic instrument, three octaves with the lowest note middle C. It's the range of the flute. They make another one with a little harder reed which responds with a little more of an aggressive

sound

"The guitar is a Gibson ES-175, an old Charlie Christian type. It's got that warm jazz sound like Jim Hall uses. I like a little chorus effect on it, almost like a vibraphone note, like a Milt Jackson note. It's nothing fancy. I like a Polytone amplifier or a Roland Jazz Chorus."

The whistle is made with 1922 model Belgian lips.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader
 THE BRASIL PROJECT—Private 01005-82101
 THE BRASIL PROJECT 2—Private 01005-82110
 MARTIAL SOLAL/TOOTS THIELEMANS—Erato 2292-45795
 MAN BITES HARMONICA—Fantasy/OJC 1738
 AQUARELA DO BRASIL—Verve 830 391-2 (w/Elis Regina)
 TOOTS & SVEND—Gazell 1008 (Sven Asmussen)
 THE SILVER COLLECTION—Verve 825 086-2
 DO NOT LEAVE ME—Slash ST-CD-12
 ONLY TRUST YOUR HEART—Concord Jazz 355
 FOOTPRINTS—EmArcy 846 650
 FOR MY LADY—EmArcy 314 510 133
 with others
 COME TOGETHER (A GUITAR TRIBUTE TO THE BEATLES)—NYC 6004 2 (Mike Mainieri)

AFFINITY—Warner Bros. 3293-2 (Bill Evans)
 EVANESSENCE—JazzCity 00172 (Fred Hersch)
 THE FRENCH CONNECTION—Angel 7 49761 2 (Fred Hersch)
 RED SQUARE BLUE—Angel 0777 7 5474 2 9 (Fred Hersch)
 ELLA ABRACA JOBIM—Pablo 26 30-201 (Ella Fitzgerald)
 DIGITAL AT MONTREUX—Pablo 2308226 (Dizzy Gillespie—out of print)
 YOU WON'T FORGET ME—Verve 847 482 (Shirley Horn)
 WALKING IN SPACE—A&M 0801 (Quincy Jones)
 GULA MATARI—A&M 0820 (Quincy Jones)
 SMACKWATER JACK—Mobile Fidelity 10-00776 (Quincy Jones)
 WORD OF MOUTH—Warner Bros. 3535 (Jaco Pastorius)

Wild B-3 Kingdom

RON LEVY

By Geoffrey Himes



The life of a producer is not an easy one. Ron Levy, the former keyboardist for B.B. King, Albert King, and Roomful of Blues, was recently in New Orleans, producing an album by Charles Brown, the 71-year-old West Coast bluesman. All that was left to be done was the photo session for the album cover; but when Levy arrived at the hotel, Brown was nowhere to be found.

"Charles has hundreds of friends in New Orleans," Levy recalls, "and he could have been anywhere. So I stood at the hotel front desk and asked myself, what would a detective like Rockford do in a situation like this? Then I remembered that all the rooms were on my credit card, so I gave the woman my card and asked to see the phone logs.

"Sure enough, there was a call from Charles' room that morning, so I ducked around the corner and called the number. Who should answer the phone but Fats Domino. He said, 'Hel-l-l-o-o-o,' in that Fats Domino voice of his, and I asked if Charles Brown was there. He was; I picked him up, and we were only 20 minutes late for the photo session—which, in New Orleans, is like being early."

After 20 years of playing the keys for the two Kings of the blues and for Roomful, Rhode Island's legendary jump-blues band, Levy is now enjoying a second career as one of the country's busiest blues producers. He heads up his own label, Bullseye Blues (a subsidiary of Rounder), and in the past three years has produced albums by Champion Jack Dupree, Luther Johnson, Ann Peebles, Otis Clay, Eddie Hinton, Jimmy McCracklin, the Re-Birth Brass Band, and many more.

Right now, however, he's most excited about his third solo album, *B-3 Blues And Grooves* (Bullseye 9532), an all-instrumental

organ recording. Recording on four different sessions with four different bands in four different studios around the country, the project alternates between the jazz-organ sound of Levy's heroes Jimmy Smith and Groove Holmes and the r&b organ sound of his Memphis heroes Booker T. Jones and Charles Hodges. What unites the different songs is the sound of the Hammond organ and Levy's two-fisted approach.

"I got a reputation as a piano player," Levy says, "because that's where the gigs were and because most bands don't want to hump around a B-3. But the organ was my first love. I saw Billy Preston playing organ in the Ray Charles Band when I was 13, and I took all my grass-cutting and snow-shoveling money and bought a Farfisa. Then I got a Vox. By the time I was 15, I had my first B-3. I loved that there were two keyboards—three, if you include the pedals—and you could not only get a lot of different colors out of it, but you could also change the colors while you played."

The three songs with Boston jazz guitarist Gray Sargent boast a crisp swing driven by the organ's pulsing chords underneath the tasteful single-note solos by Levy and Sargent. Two songs with Boston bar-band legend Chris "Stovall" Brown dig into the kind of unshakable Memphis groove made famous by Booker T. & the MGs and by Hodges' Hi Rhythm Section. Two more songs on the album's initial release featured give-and-take jams with Texas blues great Allen Collins; but those have been removed from future pressings after a dispute with Collin's record company. They've been replaced by similar jams with two underrated blues guitarists: L.A.'s Smokey Wilson and Memphis' Smokin' Joe Kubek.

"When I was a teenager," Levy explains, "I

used to take the train from Brookline into Boston to see these unbelievable musicians like John Coltrane, Art Blakey, and Wes Montgomery at the Jazz Workshop. Or we'd go over to Club 47 in Cambridge and see blues shows by Muddy Waters, Buddy Guy, and Otis Spann. I'd go from one end of town to the other, and that's how I ended up loving both kinds of music. It all seemed pretty similar. They all put a lot of energy and heart into their playing.

"I'm Jewish," he adds, "and I'm pretty religious. When you pray, you get as much out of it as you put into it. When I'm at the synagogue, and someone else is praying with a lot of feeling, I can feel it in my heart. The same is true in a concert hall or nightclub: when someone is playing with a lot of feeling, it really connects with me, whether it's Jack McDuff or Sly Stone."

As a producer of veteran bluesmen, Levy tries to achieve a balance between the kind of music that made their various reputations and the kind of music they play in their current live shows. "I try to treat the musicians better than the way I was treated," he says. "I find I get better results with sugar than vinegar. Someone like Charles Brown has been screwed over so many times by record companies, club owners, and the mob that it's important for someone like me to appreciate him.

"For example, he got into a cocktail mood and wanted to put Billy Joel's 'Just The Way You Are' on the album. In my younger, dumber days, I would have blurted out, 'That stinks.' But this time I just hung back until I heard something I liked. So when he switched to Billie Holiday's 'Gloomy Sunday,' I got all enthusiastic. He said, 'You like that? Well, I also got a Dinah Washington number.'" **DB**

DOWN BEAT'S

41st Annual Int'l Critics Poll

WHAT GOES AROUND . . .

It seems the more things change, the more they stay the same. Names like Henderson, Haden, Hooker, Swallow, B.B., and Toots are back on top for our 41st annual Critics Poll.

Typically, however, the Poll also enjoys some nifty surprises, too. Try on Jackie McLean as alto saxman of the year, topping perennial fav Phil Woods. And cover man Lester Bowie keeping Wynton Marsalis company for top honors in the trumpet category. Maybe the biggest upset this year was trombonist J.J. Johnson (!) beating out six-time winner Ray Anderson. For Talent Deserving Wider Recognition, try on Joe Lovano for Jazz Artist of the Year, rising star Gonzalo Rubalcaba in a tie with (three-peat) Geri Allen for piano honors, Joshua Redman for tenor sax, Kenny Garrett for alto, repeat-winners Bob Belden for best arranger and Jane Bunnett for soprano, and Sonny Sharrock's band for electric jazz group. As for Record Label of the Year, how about Verve and their assorted stable respectfully topping Blue Note, which won the past three years. Its superb Billie Holiday box set, *The Complete Billie Holiday On Verve*, won handily as Reissue of the Year.

Speaking of Verve, the most significant fact of this year's Poll is that last year's triple-crown winner Joe Henderson has done it again, winning in the Jazz Artist, Album, and Tenor Saxophonist of the Year categories! He's won the Triple Crown for the third time in a row—last year's Critics and Readers polls, now this. It's the first time anyone in the history of DB polling has done that.

A final note regarding this year's Poll. Some of you may have noticed we changed a few of the categories. Specifically, we've condensed the Blues and R&B/Soul categories into the Blues category, and the Rock and World Beat categories into the Beyond category. We found the labeling more consistent. Look for the new categories in the 1993 Reader's Poll ballot in this issue.

Again, congratulations to everyone, whether your spot was at the top or somewhere in-between. Let's remember that last year's also-rans can, and do, become next year's winners. What goes around will come around.

—John Ephland

JAZZ ALBUM OF THE YEAR

- 90 Joe Henderson, *So Near, So Far (Musings For Miles)* [Verve]
- 41 Charlie Haden, *Haunted Heart* [Verve]
- 41 Wynton Marsalis, *CITI Movement (Griot New York)* [Columbia]
- 23 Geri Allen, *Maroons* [Blue Note]
- 22 Henry Threadgill, *Too Much Sugar For A Dime* [Axiom]
- 18 Benny Carter, *Harlem Renaissance* [MusicMasters]
- 18 Thelonious Monk, *Live At The Five Spot* [Blue Note]
- 16 John Scofield, *What We Do* [Blue Note]
- 16 Steve Turre, *Sanctified Shells* [Antilles]
- 14 Joe Lovano, *From The Soul* [Blue Note]
- 13 Anthony Braxton, *Willisau (Quartet) 1991* [hat ART]



BLUES ALBUM OF THE YEAR

- 33 John Lee Hooker, *Boom Boom* [Pointblank/Virgin]

- 19 Charles Brown, *Someone To Love* [Bullseye]
- 19 Buddy Guy, *Feels Like Rain* [Silvertone]
- 18 Robben Ford, *Robben Ford & The Blue Line* [Stretch]
- 17 Dr. John, *Goin' Back To New Orleans* [Warner Bros.]
- 14 Bobby Parker, *Bent Out Of Shape* [Black Top]
- 14 Pinetop Perkins, *Portrait Of A Delta Bluesman* [Omega]
- 12 Various Artists, *Alligator Records 20th Anniversary Tour* [Alligator]

BEYOND ALBUM OF THE YEAR

- 20 Mario Bauza, *Tanga* [Messidor]
- 20 Sting, *10 Summoner's Tales* [A&M]
- 17 Los Lobos, *Kiko* [Slash/Warner Bros.]
- 15 Arrested Development, *3 Years 5 Months & 2 Days In The Life Of . . .* [Chrysalis]
- 13 Anouar Brahen, *Conte de l'incroyable amour* [ECM]
- 13 Tom Waits, *Bone Machine* [Island]

REISSUE ALBUM OF THE YEAR

- 77 Billy Holiday, *The Complete Billy Holiday On Verve* [Verve]
- 42 Art Blakey, *The Complete Blue Note Recordings of Art Blakey's 1960 Jazz Messengers* [Blue Note/Mosaic]
- 30 Sun Ra, *Saturn Reissue Series* [Evidence]
- 27 Sonny Rollins, *The Complete Prestige Recordings* [Prestige]
- 23 Ella Fitzgerald, *75th Birthday Celebration* [Decca]
- 23 Wes Montgomery, *The Complete Riverside Recordings* [Riverside]
- 19 Dizzy Gillespie, *Dizzy's Diamonds* [Verve]
- 19 Jimmy Giuffre, *1961* [ECM]
- 16 John Coltrane, *The Major Works* [Impulse!]
- 15 Coleman Hawkins, *Rainbow Mist* [Delmark]
- 14 Ella Fitzgerald, *First Lady Of Song* [Verve]

RECORD LABEL OF THE YEAR

- 171 Verve
- 127 Blue Note
- 62 DIW
- 61 Mango/Island
- 57 Concord
- 45 Mosaic
- 35 Columbia
- 30 Black Saint/Soul Note



JAZZ ARTIST OF THE YEAR

- 120 Joe Henderson
- 88 Wynton Marsalis
- 51 David Murray
- 44 Benny Carter
- 30 Charlie Haden
- 29 Branford Marsalis
- 25 Randy Weston
- 23 Henry Threadgill

Talent Deserving Wider Recognition

- 39 Joe Lovano
- 29 Gonzalo Rubalcaba
- 26 Geri Allen
- 22 Henry Threadgill
- 21 Joshua Redman
- 14 Benny Green
- 13 Bill Frisell



BLUES ARTIST OF THE YEAR

- 110 **B.B. King**
 - 71 Buddy Guy
 - 71 John Lee Hooker
 - 63 Charles Brown
 - 31 Albert Collins
 - 24 Ray Charles
 - 21 Otis Rush
- TDWR**
- 23 **Lil' Ed**
 - 22 Joe Louis Walker
 - 18 Pinetop Perkins
 - 16 Gatemouth Brown
 - 16 Robert Ward
 - 12 Charles Brown
 - 10 Koko Taylor

BEYOND ARTIST OF THE YEAR

- 36 **Tom Waits**
 - 32 Sting
 - 23 Milton Nascimento
 - 18 Youssou N'Dour
 - 17 Peter Gabriel
 - 16 Eric Clapton
 - 9 Prince
 - 8 John Zorn
- TDWR**
- 20 **Lyle Lovett**
 - 15 Daniel Lanois
 - 14 Peter Gabriel
 - 11 Richard Thompson

COMPOSER

- 69 **Muhai Richard Abrams**
- 65 Henry Threadgill
- 60 Wynton Marsalis
- 59 Carla Bley
- 46 Benny Carter
- 35 Randy Weston
- 27 Toshiko Akiyoshi
- 21 Ornette Coleman
- 19 Julius Hemphill
- 16 Anthony Braxton
- 16 Pat Metheny

- TDWR**
- 37 **Bobby Watson**
 - 30 Geri Allen
 - 25 Bobby Previte
 - 22 Willem Breuker
 - 20 Ed Wilkerson
 - 18 Julius Hemphill
 - 17 Bob Mintzer
 - 14 Dave Murray

ARRANGER

- 69 **Carla Bley**
- 69 Benny Carter
- 53 Toshiko Akiyoshi
- 41 Henry Threadgill
- 33 Frank Foster
- 30 Jimmy Heath
- 29 Slide Hampton
- 27 Sun Ra
- 21 Bill Holman
- 19 Wynton Marsalis



BILL DOUTHART

- TDWR**
- 52 **Bob Belden**
 - 31 Don Sickler
 - 27 Willem Breuker
 - 26 John Zorn
 - 23 Bob Mintzer
 - 17 Jimmy Heath
 - 11 George Gruntz

PRODUCER

- 130 **Michael Cuscuna**
 - 46 Giovanni Bonandrin
 - 43 John Snyder
 - 39 Orrin Keepnews
 - 38 Carl Jefferson
- TDWR**
- 51 **Delfeayo Marsalis**
 - 36 Nils Winther
 - 17 Bill Laswell
 - 16 Carl Jefferson
 - 16 Gerry Teekens
 - 15 Hal Willner
 - 11 Matt Pierson
 - 9 Jost Gebers
 - 9 John Snyder

BIG BAND

- 102 **Count Basie**
- 94 Akiyoshi/Tabackin
- 76 Sun Ra Arkestra
- 72 McCoy Tyner
- 50 David Murray
- 45 Charlie Haden's Liberation Music Orchestra
- 35 Muhai Richard Abrams
- 28 Mingus Big Band
- 21 Willem Breuker Kollektief
- 20 Illinois Jacquet

TDWR

- 68 **Either/Orchestra**
- 54 Peter Apfelbaum & the Hieroglyphics Ensemble
- 36 George Gruntz Concert Band
- 24 Willem Breuker Kollektief
- 21 Clayton/Hamilton
- 17 McCoy Tyner
- 12 Ed Wilkerson's Shadow Vignettes
- 12 Jimmy Heath

ACOUSTIC JAZZ GROUP

- 100 **Wynton Marsalis**
- 68 Phil Woods
- 45 Art Ensemble of Chicago
- 38 Bobby Watson
- 28 Modern Jazz Quartet
- 25 Charlie Haden's Quartet West
- 23 Henry Threadgill
- 19 Branford Marsalis
- 17 Steve Lacy
- 17 Randy Weston
- 16 Chick Corea's Akoustic Band
- 15 Tony Williams
- 14 Keith Jarrett Standards Trio
- 14 World Saxophone Quartet



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LES MORSILLO

ELECTRIC JAZZ GROUP

- 127 **John Scofield**
- 79 Bill Frisell
- 66 Ornette Coleman
- 51 Pat Metheny
- 34 Henry Threadgill
- 29 Chick Corea's Electric Band
- 26 Brecker Brothers
- 23 Zawinul Syndicate
- 16 Yellowjackets

TDWR

- 37 **Sonny Sharrock**
- 35 Yellowjackets
- 34 Steve Coleman & Five Elements
- 34 Bela Fleck & the Flecktones
- 22 Bill Frisell
- 17 Naked City
- 15 Curlew

BLUES GROUP

- 80 **B.B. King**
 - 35 Robert Cray
 - 30 Albert Collins & the Icebreakers
 - 30 Neville Brothers
 - 22 Kinsey Report
 - 17 Roomful of Blues
 - 17 Dirty Dozen Brass Band
 - 12 Holmes Brothers
- TDWR**
- 28 **Little Charlie & the Nightcats**
 - 24 Lil' Ed & the Blues Imperials
 - 20 Saffire—The Uppity Blues Women
 - 15 Robben Ford
 - 10 Charles Brown
 - 10 Holmes Brothers
 - 8 Cheatham's Sweet Baby Blues Band
 - 8 Roomful Of Blues

BEYOND GROUP

- 31 **Kronos Quartet**
- 31 **Los Lobos**
- 25 George Clinton & the P-Funk All-Stars
- 19 Living Colour
- 19 Tito Puente
- 18 Neville Brothers
- 17 Arrested Development
- 13 Boukman Ekperryans
- 13 U2
- 10 JB Horns

- TDWR**
14 Greg Osby
 13 Morphine
 11 Digable Planets
 10 Kronos Quartet
 10 Red Hot Chili Peppers



ROBERT NIES

- SOPRANO SAX**

244 Steve Lacy
 95 Branford Marsalis
 95 Wayne Shorter
 90 Jane Ira Bloom
 68 Dave Liebman
 45 Bob Wilber

- TDWR**
80 Jane Bunnett
 69 Jane Ira Bloom
 26 Greg Osby
 21 Courtney Pine
 20 Ravi Coltrane
 19 Branford Marsalis

ALTO SAXOPHONE

137 Jackie McLean
 136 Phil Woods
 116 Bobby Watson
 74 Ornette Coleman
 60 Benny Carter
 56 Lee Konitz
 42 Frank Morgan



SUSAN C. FRIGAN

- TROMBONE**

211 J.J. Johnson
 166 Ray Anderson
 155 Steve Turre
 40 Curtis Fuller
 34 Robin Eubanks
 33 Albert Mangelsdorff

- TDWR**
66 Frank Lacy
 60 Robin Eubanks
 44 Steve Turre
 33 Craig Harris
 28 Fred Wesley
 27 Wycliffe Gordon
 27 George Lewis



HYOU VIELZ

- CLARINET**

176 Don Byron
 127 Eddie Daniels
 103 Buddy De Franco
 68 Alvin Batiste
 55 Kenny Davern
 42 Phil Woods
 31 Dr. Michael White

- TENOR SAXOPHONE**

226 Joe Henderson
 163 Sonny Rollins
 117 David Murray
 93 Joe Lovano
 39 Johnny Griffin
 35 Branford Marsalis

- TDWR**
89 Joshua Redman
 66 Joe Lovano
 36 Ralph Moore
 28 Von Freeman
 28 Gary Thomas
 27 Billy Harper
 24 Craig Handy

- BARITONE SAXOPHONE**

188 Hamiet Bluiett
 172 Gerry Mulligan
 111 Nick Brignola
 49 John Surman
 44 Ronnie Cuber

MARION LETTLINGER



- TDWR**
70 Gary Smulyan
 51 John Surman
 44 Don Byron
 44 Joe Temperley
 38 Mwata Bowden
 31 Peter Brötzmann



HYOU VIELZ

- TDWR**
68 Marty Ehrlich
 64 Ken Peplowski
 51 Don Byron
 28 Dr. Michael White
 22 Louis Scialus
 24 Phil Woods

- FLUTE**

171 James Newton
 106 Lew Tabackin
 94 James Moody
 77 Frank Wess
 60 Henry Threadgill

- TDWR**
47 Dave Valentin
 38 Kent Jordan
 29 Frank Wess
 25 Henry Threadgill



ENID FARBER

- VIBES**

224 Milt Jackson
 179 Bobby Hutcherson
 133 Gary Burton
 50 Lionel Hampton
 38 Steve Nelson
 26 Terry Gibbs



MITCHELL SEIDEL

- TDWR**
101 Steve Nelson
 94 Jay Hoggard
 55 Brian Carrott
 32 Khan Jamal
 26 Gust Tsilis

On the road with
TOMMY FLANAGAN



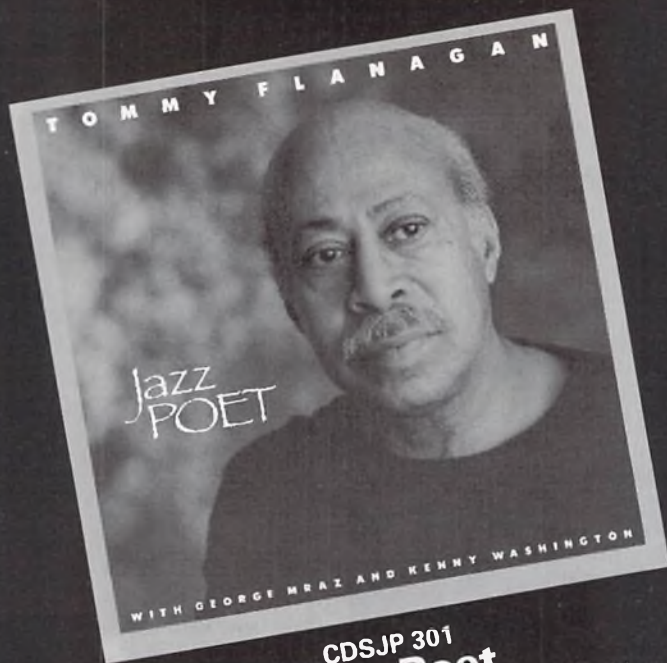
Photography: W. J. de Zwart

The road of pianist Tommy Flanagan is, no doubt, one of the longest in the history of modern jazz. A long musical road of a modest genius on which we will meet a lot of acquaintances. But let's not run ahead of things and simply start off in Detroit. It is soon after the war, Tommy is only fifteen years old but already a professional pianist through and through. Imagine a small and cosy jazz club: The Bluebird. As if he has never done anything else in his life (has he ever done anything else in his life?) he easily plays with guys who originate from the same fertile soil: the brothers Jones, Kenny Burrell, Milt Jackson, to mention just a few. But of course Detroit is

AGAN

only Detroit, and in the fifties New York is the place to be. So everybody goes to New York and that modest pianist comes along. And there he is again: the ideal accompanist. Miles Davis hears him play and engages him. Sonny Rollins hears him play and engages him. John Coltrane hears him play and engages him. Tommy Flanagan develops into a three star session musician who enables all those great horn men to turn in their best performances, which for the greater part have been preserved. Not only horn men, but guitarists, vibraphonists and singers, too, call Tommy if they want to show their best side. And not to forget the lady singers. Ella Fitzgerald. On the road in the sixties and seventies she would forget to pack something now and then, but Tommy Flanagan was always in her bag. No wonder: of course you don't leave the man who, according to reviewers, has Teddy Wilson's sensitiveness, Art Tatum's technique and Nat King Cole's energy standing on the roadside. But in spite of all those favourable reviews Tommy Flanagan's road could be called rather shadowy so far. Of course it is fine to walk in the shade, but being in the spotlight is not to be despised too, the more not when people are pleased to see (and hear) you. And yes indeed: Tommy Flanagan becomes the leader of his own combos and trios - and the road becomes lighter and lighter. In all modesty (for that's what he remains) he soon grows out into a world-famous soloist who gives fans of Oscar Peterson something to think about. With his regular bassist George Mraz and drummer Kenny Washington he records the CD *Jazz Poet*. Shortly afterwards he records the CD *Beyond the Bluebird* with George Mraz, drummer Lewis Nash and special guest guitarist Kenny Burrell (do you remember, Kenny?). Both produced by Timeless. And may we blow our own trumpet for once? The international critics applaud it and thank us heartily for having lighted Tommy Flanagan's road for an important part. And as far as we're concerned, the end of the road is not in sight at all.

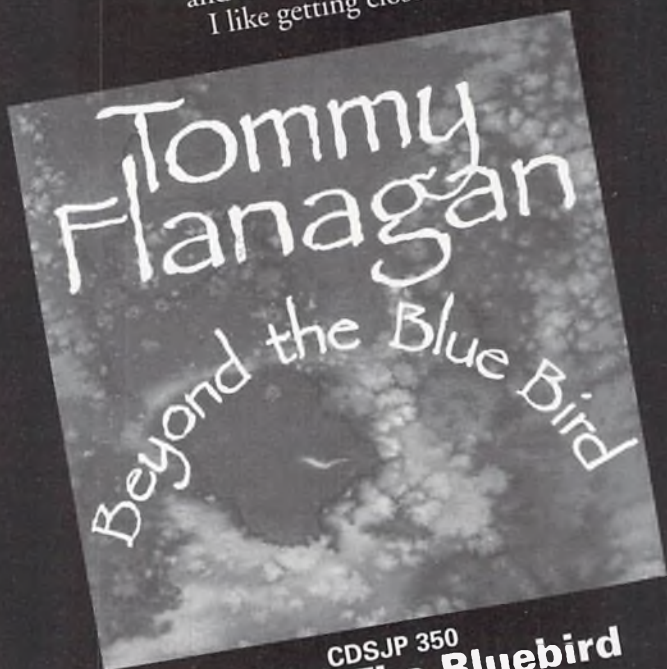
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- 48 Don Pullen
- 44 Keith Jarrett
- 42 Oscar Peterson
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- 33 Geri Allen
- 32 Randy Weston



TERI BLOOM

- TDWR**
- 54 **Geri Allen**
 - 54 **Gonzalo Rubalcaba**
 - 34 Stephen Scott
 - 33 Marilyn Crispell
 - 29 Benny Green
 - 28 Geoff Keezer
 - 25 Marcus Roberts

ORGAN

- 184 **Jimmy Smith**
- 75 Don Pullen
- 70 Jimmy McGriff
- 58 Jack McDuff
- 51 Joey DeFrancesco
- 31 Charles Earland
- 29 Barbara Dennerlein
- 29 Sun Ra



BARBARA DENNERLEIN

- TDWR**
- 84 **Barbara Dennerlein**
 - 39 Don Pullen
 - 38 Amina Claudine Myers
 - 36 Joey DeFrancesco
 - 29 Larry Goldings
 - 29 Dan Wall

ELECTRIC KEYBOARD

- 117 **Joe Zawinul**
 - 90 Chick Corea
 - 75 Sun Ra
 - 33 Lyle Mays
 - 32 Wayne Horvitz
 - 31 Herbie Hancock
 - 25 Brian Eno
- TDWR**
- 34 **Wayne Horvitz**
 - 26 Lyle Mays
 - 25 Anthony Coleman
 - 23 John Surman

ACOUSTIC GUITAR

- 130 **John McLaughlin**
 - 76 Jim Hall
 - 70 Joe Pass
 - 62 Ralph Towner
 - 32 Charlie Byrd
 - 29 Howard Alden
 - 28 Kenny Burrell
 - 24 Derek Bailey
- TDWR**
- 41 **Howard Alden**
 - 29 Bereli Lagrene
 - 22 Fareed Haque
 - 20 Adrian Legg
 - 19 Egberto Gismonti

ELECTRIC GUITAR

- 214 **John Scofield**
 - 163 Bill Frisell
 - 63 Pat Metheny
 - 53 Kenny Burrell
 - 52 Sonny Sharrock
 - 39 Jim Hall
 - 31 John Abercrombie
 - 21 Mike Stern
 - 17 Larry Coryell
- TDWR**
- 53 **Mike Stern**
 - 42 Sonny Sharrock
 - 32 Mark Whitfield
 - 25 Bill Frisell
 - 22 Howard Alden
 - 21 Kevin Eubanks

ACOUSTIC BASS

- 162 **Charlie Haden**
- 137 Dave Holland
- 112 Ray Brown
- 58 Ron Carter
- 51 Milt Hinton
- 50 Fred Hopkins
- 33 Ray Drummond
- 30 Gary Peacock
- 20 Rufus Reid

- TDWR**
- 93 **Christian McBride**
 - 50 Ray Drummond
 - 49 Anthony Cox
 - 31 Charnett Moflett
 - 28 Cecil McBee
 - 27 Fred Hopkins

ELECTRIC BASS

- 194 **Steve Swallow**
 - 81 John Patitucci
 - 63 Jamaaladeen Tacuma
 - 42 Bob Cranshaw
 - 37 Stanley Clarke
 - 27 Marcus Miller
 - 24 Gerald Veasley
- TDWR**
- 44 **Gerald Veasley**
 - 28 Bill Laswell
 - 17 Fred Frith
 - 16 Jack Bruce
 - 15 Eberhard Weber

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- 203 **Stephane Grappelli**
 - 81 Billy Bang
 - 80 Leroy Jenkins
 - 73 John Blake
 - 38 Jean Luc Ponty
 - 27 Johnny Frigo
- TDWR**
- 43 **Regina Carter**
 - 41 Mark Feldman
 - 30 Johnny Frigo
 - 29 Terry Jenoure
 - 29 Claude Williams
 - 25 Svend Asmussen

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- 103 **Airto Moriera**
 - 84 Nana Vasconcelos
 - 75 Trilok Gurtu
 - 68 Famoudou Don Moye
 - 55 Tito Puente
 - 37 Jerry Gonzalez
 - 25 Poncho Sanchez
- TDWR**
- 52 **Jerry Gonzalez**
 - 38 Poncho Sanchez
 - 34 Giovanni Hidalgo
 - 32 Trilok Gurtu
 - 28 Glen Velez
 - 28 Kahil El' Zabar
 - 20 Marilyn Mazur



SUSAN C. RAGAN



R. ANDREW LEPLLEY

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- 134 **Max Roach**
 - 129 Jack DeJohnette
 - 127 Elvin Jones
 - 72 Billy Higgins
 - 64 Tony Williams
 - 44 Victor Lewis
 - 30 Roy Haynes
 - 29 Andrew Cyrille
 - 24 Paul Motian
 - 22 Peter Erskine
- TDWR**
- 58 **Lewis Nash**
 - 48 Kenny Washington
 - 45 Marvin "Smitty" Smith
 - 34 Ralph Peterson
 - 30 Victor Lewis
 - 25 Jeff "Tain" Watts
 - 24 Bill Stewart
 - 23 Andrew Cyrille

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 - 95 Steve Turre (conch shells)
 - 61 Bob Stewart (tuba)
 - 46 David Murray (bass clarinet)
 - 37 Howard Johnson (tuba)
 - 26 Bela Fleck (banjo)
- TDWR**
- 49 **Don Byron (bass clarinet)**
 - 29 Steve Turre (conch shells)
 - 20 David Darling (cello)
 - 19 Tom Cora (cello)
 - 16 Diedre Murray (cello)

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- 178 **Joe Williams**
- 119 Mel Tormé
- 86 Bobby McFerrin
- 70 Jon Hendricks
- 42 Jimmy Scott
- 40 Mark Murphy
- 26 Tony Bennett
- 19 Ray Charles
- 19 Bob Dorough

- TDWR**
- 46 **Mark Murphy**
 - 37 David Frishberg
 - 32 John Pizzarelli
 - 28 Ernie Andrews
 - 27 Jimmy Scott

MALE SINGER (non-jazz)

- 75 **Aaron Neville**
54 Tony Bennett
30 Ray Charles
28 Frank Sinatra
25 Al Jarreau
23 Dr. John

TDWR

- 27 **Harry Connick Jr.**
25 Dr. John
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157 Abbey Lincoln
113 Shirley Horn

- 80 Sheila Jordan
67 Cassandra Wilson
48 Ella Fitzgerald
42 Carmen McRae

TDWR

- 66 **Cassandra Wilson**
57 Vanessa Rubin
28 Patricia Barber
26 Carol Sloane
25 Madeline Eastman
23 Shirley Horn

FEMALE SINGER (non-jazz)

- 58 **Bonnie Raitt**
41 Aretha Franklin
36 Ruth Brown
36 k.d. lang
21 Sade



PHOTO: WELZ

TDWR

- 16 **Lucinda Williams**
15 Diamanda Galas
13 Ruth Brown
12 Vanessa Rubin

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- 106 Manhattan Transfer
75 Hendricks Family
42 New York Voices
24 Jackie & Roy

TDWR

- 35 **Sweet Honey In The Rock**
27 Zap Mama
26 New York Voices
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THE CRITICS

Following is a list of critics who voted in **DB's** 41st annual International Critics Poll. Ninety critics voted this year, distributing 10 points among up to three choices (no more than five votes per choice) in each of two categories: Established Talent and Talent Deserving Wider Recognition. The participants were:

Frank Alkyer: assoc. publisher, **DB**

Jon Andrews: **DB**

Peter Bastian: photographer; Radio SR, Germany.

Chuck Berg: Dir. of Media Studies, U. of Kansas; *Jazz Educators Journal*; *JazzTimes*

Larry Birnbaum: **DB**; *Pulse!*; *New York Newsday*

Bob Blumenthal: *Boston Globe*; *CD Review*; *Atlantic*.

Philip Booth: bassist; **DB**; *Tampa Tribune*; *Variety*.

Michael Bourne: **DB**; *Hennessey Jazz Notes*; *Jazz Journal*; *WBGO-FM* [Newark].

Pawel Brodowski: editor, *Jazz Forum* [Poland].

Sydney Byrd: photography.

Laura Connelly: **DB**; *The Wire*

Thomas Conrad: *CD Review*.

John Corbett: **DB**; *The Wire*

Owen Cordle: **DB**; *JazzTimes*; *Raleigh News & Observer*.

Joe Cuniff: **DB**

Chip Deffaa: *N.Y. Post*; author, *Swing Legacy*, *Voices Of The Jazz Age*, *In The Mainstream*.

Lauren Deutsch: **DB**; photographer.

John Diliberto: host/producer, *Echoes* [NPR]; **DB**.

Len Dobbin: host/producer, *CJFM* [Montreal]; *Jazz Report* [Toronto].

Bill Douthart: photographer, **DB**

Jose Duarte: Portuguese radio, press, television

Gudrun Endress: editor, *Jazz Podium* [Germany]; *Radio SDR* [Stuttgart].

Ed Enright: editor, *Music Inc.*; associate editor, **DB**.

John Ephland: managing editor, **DB**.

J.B. Figi: programming committee/Chicago Jazz Festival.

William Fowler: *Fowler Music Enterprises*

Maurizio Franco: *Musica Jazz* [Italy].

Jack Fuller: editor, *Chicago Tribune*.

Robert Gaspar: *Jazziz*; *Coda*; **DB**; author, *Everybody And I Stopped Breathing: Jazz In American Poetry*.

Alain Gerber: *Compact Jazz & Blues*; *Radio France*.

Linda Gruno: **DB**; *Westword* [Denver].

Elaine Guregian: **DB**; *Akron Beacon Journal*.

Frank-John Hadley: **DB**; *Jazziz*; *Living Blues*; author, *The Grove Press Guide To The Blues On CD*.

Michael Handler: **DB** correspondent [San Francisco]; jazz video producer; vice president, *Jazz In Flight*; *California Jazz*.

Dave Helland: associate editor, **DB**; author, *Sartre Talks To Teens*.

Patrick Henry: *DBA Jazz*.

Robert Hicks: **DB**; *Jazziz*; *The Villager*; *Guitar Player*; *Bass Player*; *Coda*.

Geoffrey Himes: **DB**; *Washington Post*; *Request*.

Eugene Holley Jr.: *Jazz Information Specialist*—American Music Center.

Randi Hultin: **DB** correspondent [Norway]; *Jazz Forum*; *Jazz Journal*.

Willard Jenkins: Exec. Dir., National Jazz Service Organization.

Gene Kalbacher: editor & publisher, *Hot House*; columnist, *CMJ New Music Report*

Leigh Kamman: Spokesperson; *The Jazz Image* [Minnesota Public Radio].

Linda Kohanov: **DB**; *Pulse!*

Peter Kostakis: **DB**

Tom Krehbiel: *CD Review*.

Art Lange: co-editor, *Moment's Notice: Jazz In Poetry And Prose*.

John Litweiler: **DB**; author, *The Freedom Principle*, *Ornette Coleman: A Harmolodic Life*.

Jaap Ludeke: *Euro Jazz Radio* [Netherlands].

Lars Lystedt: **DB** correspondent [Sweden]; *Orkester Journalen*.

John McDonough: **DB**; *Wall St. Journal*.

Suzanne McElfresh: **DB**; *Creem*; *Seventeen*; *Musican*.

Jim Macnie: *Pleasant Individual Productions*.

Howard Mandel: **DB**; *Pulse!*; *NPR*.

Bill Milkowski: **DB**; *Guitar Player*; *Swing Journal*

Dan Morgenstern: director, Institute of Jazz Studies [Rutgers U.]

Michael G. Nastos: **DB**; *Jazz Edition*—*All Music Guide*; *Cadence*; *Ann Arbor News*; *WEMU-FM* [Ypsilanti, MI].

Stuart Nicholson: author, *Jazz—The Modern Resurgence*, *Ella Fitzgerald*; *Wire*.

Dan Ouellette: **DB**; *Pulse!*; *San Francisco Bay Guardian*.

Don Palmer: honorary chair emeritus, *Twain's Tin Ear Productions*.

Michael Point: **DB**; *Austin American-Statesman*

Bob Protzman: *St. Paul Pioneer Press*; *Wednesday Evening Jazz*; *KBEM-FM*.

Becca Pulliam: producer; *JazzSet* [NPR]; *WBGO*.

Doug Ramsey: *JazzTimes*; *Texas Monthly*; author, *Jazz Matters*

Howard Reich: *Chicago Tribune*

Jim Roberts: editor, *Bass Player*.

Mark Ruffin: *Chicago Magazine*; *WNJA-FM* [Chicago].

Robert D. Rusch: editor, *Cadence*

Ben Sandmel: **DB**

Gene Santoro: *The Nation*.

Mitchell Seidel: **DB**; *Swing Journal*; *Hot House*

Wayne K. Self: **DB**; *Mid-America Arts Alliance*

Chris Sheridan: **DB**; *Jazz*; author, *Count Basie: A Bi-Discography*

Bill Shoemaker: **DB**; *JazzTimes*.

Joel Simpson: **DB** correspondent [New Orleans]

Jack Sohmer: **DB**; *JazzTimes*; *The Mississippi Rag*.

Yves Sportis: *Jazz Hot*

Stephanie Stein: **DB**

David Steinberg: *Albuquerque Journal*

Zan Stewart: **DB**; *Los Angeles Times*

Andrew Sussman: *Fanfare*

Robin Tolleson: "White Chocolate"; **DB**; *Billboard*; *MIX*.

Marc Weidenbaum: senior editor, *Pulse!*

Kevin Whitehead: **DB**; *NPR's Fresh Air*; *Coda*; *Pulse!*; *Cadence*; *CD Review*.

Michael Wilderman: photographer

Russell Woessner: **DB** correspondent (Philadelphia); *City Paper*

Joseph Woodard: **DB**; *Musican*; *Entertainment Weekly*

Scott Yanow: **DB**; *JazzTimes*; *Jazziz*; *Cadence*; *Coda*.

Shoichi Yui: jazz critic.

Mike Zwerin: *International Herald Tribune* [Paris].

Why Jelly Roll Still Matters

JELLY ROLL MORTON

By Butch Thompson



Jelly Roll Morton's name is back up in lights. During the 1920s, the New Orleans pianist and composer made some of the most important records in jazz history, a body of work so innovative that his often-cited claim to have invented jazz "in 1902" (contained in his 1938 letter to Robert Ripley's *Believe It Or Not* radio show) almost seems justified. But Morton's star faded fast during the '30s, and for decades he was all but forgotten by musicians and the public. His current status as a hot ticket on Broadway and as a revered jazz pioneer whose works are programmed at Lincoln Center seems at last to be redressing the balance.

The Broadway show *Jelly's Last Jam* has made Morton's name more bankable than at any time since the '20s. But Luther Henderson's score for that show (Mercury 314 510 846) seriously misrepresents Morton's music, reducing it to an unrecognizable parody. Another New York show, titled *Jelly Roll Morton—A Me-Morial*, was a more sympathetic evocation of both the man and his music. *Me-Morial*, a two-man portrait by actor Vernel Bagneris and pianist Morten Gunnar Larsen, ran for a record 22 weeks at Michael's Pub, a kind of antidote to the harsh, misleading story told by the bigger show.

As a pianist who often programs Morton's music, I found myself involved with both New York shows. I consulted with *JLJ*'s writer, George C. Wolfe, and with the show's

producers before Henderson was hired to do the score, and I later filled in for Larsen at Michael's Pub for about three weeks. I'm elated to see Morton's name up in lights again, but I think the general public's interest is probably a passing thing. More germane is a kind of resifting of the jazz tradition which has been going on for some time, and which has already had a profound effect on jazz as a whole. This new awareness by musicians, critics, and audiences means that Jelly Roll Morton may at last be getting the serious attention he deserves after decades of neglect.

Born in 1890 in New Orleans, Morton was a member of the first generation of jazz musicians from that city. He was a Louisiana Creole (of mixed African and European heritage), and his childhood included formal music lessons and visits to the French Opera House as well as the allure of the music of the streets and of Storyville, the red-light district where he was playing piano by his teens. Banished by his grandmother when she learned how he was earning his money, he began a lifetime of wandering, sometimes living as much by his wits as by his music. His early career included work as a touring dancer and comedian, a variety of non-musical enterprises (boxing promotion, nightclub management), and residencies in Los Angeles, Tijuana, Vancouver, Detroit, and Chicago, where his "Original Jelly Roll Blues," often cited as the first published jazz

composition, came out in 1915.

In 1923, he was in Chicago again, and his best recordings date from the ensuing five years. A series of solos from 1923-'24, definitive originals like "King Porter Stomp" and "The Wolverines," are enough to establish him as a giant. He was arguably the first jazz composer, writing pieces which required improvisation to be performed correctly. In 1926, he began his celebrated Red Hot Peppers recordings for Victor. These innovative records are his most famous, and their importance can hardly be overestimated. They show that he was the first jazz *auteur*, the kind of artist who puts together everything about his recordings—he wrote the music, arranged it, chose and rehearsed the musicians, and in the process summed up and redefined jazz. Based on these performances, he ranks with the giants—Ellington, Monk, and their heirs.

But by 1930, when the 21-year-old banjoist and guitarist Danny Barker met him in New York, Morton's star was already slipping. "By that time, Jelly had more or less given up on New York," Barker said recently. "Everybody was coming up with Lindy Hops, and you had to play those tempos or you were out of luck. Jelly's music was more raunchy." Morton could still come up with some well-paying gigs, Barker remembers, but his music seemed old-fashioned to the younger New York players and to the public. Morton died in 1941.

As one of the very last direct links to Morton, Barker has been much in evidence during the current revival, testifying at concerts, in print, and on various recordings. He contributes narrated segments, for instance, on *Jelly* (Columbia 53214), a new release by New Orleans' Dirty Dozen Brass Band on which, instead of their usual rehearsal-generated arrangements, the band works from charts by Wardell Quezergue, Ed Frank, and several others. The result seems less spontaneous than their usual work; this is a nervous marriage. Certainly the virtually unrecognizable "Freakish" sounds more like this band's usual brash, hell-for-leather music than does the somewhat more verbatim (but by no means literal) reading of "Milenberg Joys."

Predictably, Morton's name has been appearing in some startling places. The inveterate Dukes of Dixieland have produced *Salute To Jelly Roll Morton: The Sound That Defined Jazz* (Leisure Jazz Video MV1053 and CD MD 1053), which also features Danny Barker. Trumpeter Al Hirt, meanwhile, has been appearing at a Bourbon Street club called Jelly Roll's, and *Jelly's Last Jam* t-shirts were sighted at some traditional jazz festivals last summer.

Barker also took part in an August 1989 Morton tribute at Alice Tully Hall with Wynton Marsalis and a band led by another New Orleans musician, clarinetist Dr. Michael White. White's band of New Orleansians worked partly from transcriptions by Wardell Quezergue. Since that important concert, with good press and the Marsalis imprimatur, White and his Original Liberty Jazz Band have been extremely visible, playing New York engagements, including a tribute last August to Morton and clarinetist Johnny Dodds and successful runs at the Village Vanguard which were recorded live last winter (Antilles 314 512 168).

Marsalis' interest in historical figures like Morton and King Oliver has been extremely influential. The pianist Marcus Roberts, a graduate of Marsalis' band, is now a soloist very concerned with exploring tradition (see p. 54). His solo disc *Alone With Three Giants* (RCA/Novus 3109) juxtaposes three Morton pieces with works by Ellington and Thelonious Monk. Roberts' readings are certainly not literal, but he has studied the Morton originals closely and adheres to their spirit. He continues to program Morton's music, and played last November in a Morton tribute at the San Francisco Jazz Festival with several other pianists, including this writer. His performance of "King Porter Stomp" at that concert was impressive, based partly on Morton's 1939 record; but as usual, it was personalized. Roberts is a serious investiga-



Jelly Roll Bakers: (from front) Danny Barker, Dr. Michael White, and Wynton Marsalis

"Tradition doesn't stop change; after a time it makes its contribution. . . . So Jelly Roll Morton is finally getting his chance to make his contribution in a more expanded manner."

—Muhai Richard Abrams



tor and student of tradition, and a charismatic performer. His recent *If I Could Be With You* (RCA/Novus 63149) explores the stride piano of James P. Johnson alongside more Monk and Ellington material.

With few exceptions (such as Charles Mingus' "Jelly Roll"), Morton's music was deemed irrelevant by modern jazz musicians of the '40s, '50s, and '60s. Meanwhile, his name was kept alive by record collectors, writers, and a burgeoning traditional jazz

movement which continues today and has its roots in the so-called traditional jazz "revival" (an unfortunate word, implying that this vital music needed resuscitation) that began during the late '30s. With varying success, young musicians began investigating the tradition and trying to emulate early figures like Morton. This separate movement is still extremely active and highly visible, with proliferating traditional festivals and specialist recording companies, magazines, and more. Usually ignored by major critics and historians, this part of the jazz world actually continues to produce fine performers and shows no sign of going away. The sizable audience for the older styles has also helped keep important recordings of Morton's available.

Meanwhile, new revelations about Morton's life and music have been coming from the academic side. James Dapogny's *Ferdinand "Jelly Roll" Morton: The Collected Piano Music* (Schirmer/Smithsonian Institution Press, 1982) is a kind of equivalent to the New York Public Library's Scott Joplin edition of 1971. This book made Morton's playing accessible for study by all musicians, and in at least one case, a contemporary musician has actually based his recorded performances on the Dapogny transcriptions; the pianist Dave Burrell's *Jelly Roll Joys* (Gazell 4003) sounds almost like a sight-reading session at times, but with occasional improvised solos. Like Marcus Roberts, Burrell programs Morton's music alongside more modern material. *Brother To Brother* (Gazell 4006), a series of duets by Burrell and saxophonist David Murray, includes their reading of Morton's "New Orleans Blues."

By the '70s, a new, "inclusive" attitude toward early jazz seemed to coalesce among modern players. This inclusiveness has actually been around longer, fostered by the influential pianist Muhai Richard Abrams by the early '60s. But as recently as 1979, it was still something of a jolt when saxophonist Henry Threadgill's trio Air played Scott Joplin rags and Morton pieces on *Air Lore* (RCA/Bluebird 6578). Air's take on this music was far from literal, of course, but it was obvious that a conscious decision had been made to deal with tradition in a new, inclusive way. Instead of ignoring the past or reacting against it, musicians would study it, learn from it, and incorporate it. There were any number of approaches possible, and they were all legitimate.

Today, Abrams sees the Morton revival as a natural development: "Music is a process of change. Tradition doesn't stop change; after a time it makes its contribution. This is a whole era that people are finally coming back to look at. So Jelly Roll Morton is finally getting his chance to make his contribution in a more expanded manner." **DB**

Key

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



Horace Silver

IT'S GOT TO BE FUNKY—Columbia 53812: *FUNKY BUNKY; DUFUS RUFUS; THE LUNCEFORD LEGACY; THE HILLBILLY BEBOPPER; THE WALK AROUND; LOOK UP AND DOWN SONG; IT'S GOT TO BE FUNKY; BASICALLY BLUE; SONG FOR MY FATHER; WHEN YOU'RE IN LOVE; PUT ME IN THE BASEMENT; LITTLE MAMA; YO' MAMA'S MAMBO.*

Personnel: Silver, piano; Andy Bey, vocals; Eddie Harris, Branford Marsalis, tenor saxophone; Red Holloway, alto, tenor saxophones; Oscar Brashear, Bob Summers, Ron Stout, trumpet, flugelhorn; Suzette Moriarty, french horn; Bob McChesney, trombone; Maurice Spears, bass trombone; Bob Maize, bass; Carl Burnett, drums.

★★★★★

It's Got To Be Funky, Horace Silver's first major-label release in over a decade, is a balm for overworked ears. On this program of mostly new material, Silver remains jazz's most unabashed positivist, as his catchy themes are teeming with joyously bluesy licks and sweet, unfettered melody. Working with a brass ensemble that recalls his *Silver 'N'*... Blue Notes, Silver mixes chiming charts, the talkin'-at-ya tenors of guests Eddie Harris, Red Holloway, and Branford Marsalis, and Andy Bey's soulfully strained baritone, all of which are masterfully underpinned by Silver's patented block chords.

What's most striking about Silver's reentry into this arena is how his plain talk differs from the circumlocutions of present-day neo-classicists. Even the suave chord changes of the chestnut, "Song For My Father," have a refreshing in-the-pocket directness. Or take his solos, succinct expositions of familiar ideas, occasionally peppered with quotes or sly asides, propelled with a gospel-influenced attack. They are like the simple, sure line-drawing that speaks volumes compared to the complex, allegorical canvas. To use the parlance of his

proponents of 30 years ago, Horace Silver is saying something. —Bill Shoemaker



Benny Carter

LEGENDS—MusicMasters 62087-2: *THE MORE I SEE YOU; I WAS WRONG; WONDERLAND; BLUES IN MY HEART; YOU ARE; PEOPLE TIME; NO GREATER LOVE; SUNSET GLOW; THE LITTLE THINGS THAT MEAN SO MUCH; THE LEGEND; HONEYSUCKLE ROSE.* (69:00)

Personnel: Carter, alto saxophone; Doc Cheatham, trumpet; Hank Jones, Chris Neville (9.11), piano; Christian McBride, bass; Lewis Nash, drums.

★★★★★

LIVE AND WELL IN JAPAN—Pablo OJCCD 736-2: *SQUATTY ROO; MEDLEY; SLEEPY TIME DOWN SOUTH, I'M CONFESSIN'; WHEN YOU'RE SMILING; THEM THERE EYES; IT DON'T MEAN A THING.* (42:00)

Personnel: Carter, alto saxophone, trumpet; Budd Johnson, tenor saxophone; Cecil Payne, baritone saxophone; Britt Woodman, Cat Anderson, Joe Newman, trumpet; Nat Pierce, piano; Mundell Lowe, guitar; George Duvivier, bass; Harold Jones, drums.

★★★★ 1/2

The longest continuous solo recording career in history swings merrily into its 65th year as Benny Carter adds album number eight to his formidable body of recent MusicMasters work. Past sessions have offered Carter in conversation with such peers as Clark Terry, Kenny Barron, and Phil Woods. But *Legends* nails one of the more self-evident matches of musical temperament, Carter and Hank Jones.

To hear these two elegant old owls pool their wisdom, especially in a group of five duets on Carter compositions, is a pleasure not recorded until now. (Both played on LPs of the 1952 JATP tour, but alas, not together.) Their duos are erudite, gentle, over easy, and occasionally sublime ("People Time"). Although Carter can send up skyrockets, he prefers moderation. So most of the music here oozes out slowly, the better to let the listener fondle every gliss, pitch, and dynamic of his patented phraseology. The best of Doc Cheatham's three cameos is "Blues In My Heart," where he catches a bit of late Armstrong in his sound.

A less moderate Carter will be found on *Alive And Well In Japan*, a reissue of a 1977 concert performance that's loaded with fun, including an uncanny Satchmo impersonation by Joe Newman. The music is exciting in the manner of a jam session, though bracketed with good charts and filled with a platinum lineup of hand-picked players. If you only know Cat Anderson as the high-note man on all the Ellington

records, for instance, you will hear him here both high and wide as he unfurls his power as a straightforward jazzman. Carter, of course, is superbly nimble at the more driving tempos. No player steals the show, but together they put on a damn good one. —John McDonough



Gonzalo Rubalcaba

4 Y 20 SUITE—Blue Note CDP 7 80054 2: *PRELUDIO PROYECTO LATINO; TRANSPARENCIA; OUR SPANISH LOVE SONG; HERE, THERE AND EVERYWHERE; TRES PALABRAS; COMIENZO; LOVE LETTERS; PERFIDIA; NUESTRO BALANCE; 4 Y 20; SIEMPRE MARIA; NADIE ME AMA; QUIZAS, QUIZAS, QUIZAS.* (68:18)

Personnel: Rubalcaba, piano; Felipe Cabrera, electric bass; Julio Barreto, drums; Reynaldo Alvarez, trumpet; Charlie Haden, bass (2,3,7,8).

★★★★ 1/2

Rubalcaba's limber touch and luminous tone are beyond reproach. But his postmodern romanticism—applied to a repertoire that runs from Ornette Coleman to John Lennon to "Besame Mucho"—irks those who prefer blues to ballads, like their bebop straight, think Latin musicians should stick to their own rhythms, or wish that the last 30 years of jazz had never happened. *4 & 20 Suite*, mostly featuring the pianist's Cuban quartet, makes no attempt to mollify the critics.

Rubalcaba's hymnlike "Transparencia," performed in a duet with Charlie Haden, cops some changes from Lennon's "Imagine," while "Here, There And Everywhere" transforms the Beatles' hit into heaving, sighing poetry. Reynaldo Alvarez' trumpet gives "Preludio Proyecto Latino" and "Tres Palabras" a Milesish feel, but Julio Barreto's hard-sprung beat strips away historical context, so that it could be the Miles of 1955, or 1985. Although there are sporadic piano montunos and occasional bongos (played by Barreto?), the Mexican standard "Perfidia"—an object of Rubalcaba's affectionate, semi-abstract parody—is as close as the album comes to Latin jazz.

Ballads are Rubalcaba's specialty, and though he's extrapolated from the models of Bill Evans and Keith Jarrett to create an inventive, virtuosic, highly personal approach, the cumulative impact of so many wistful, delicate love songs is ultimately cloying. More engaging are exploratory tunes like "Comienzo," which blurs the distinctions between jazz and Latin, bop and modalism, fusion and freedom, and makes them all seem as natural a part of the mainstream tradition as "Basin Street Blues." —Larry Birnbaum

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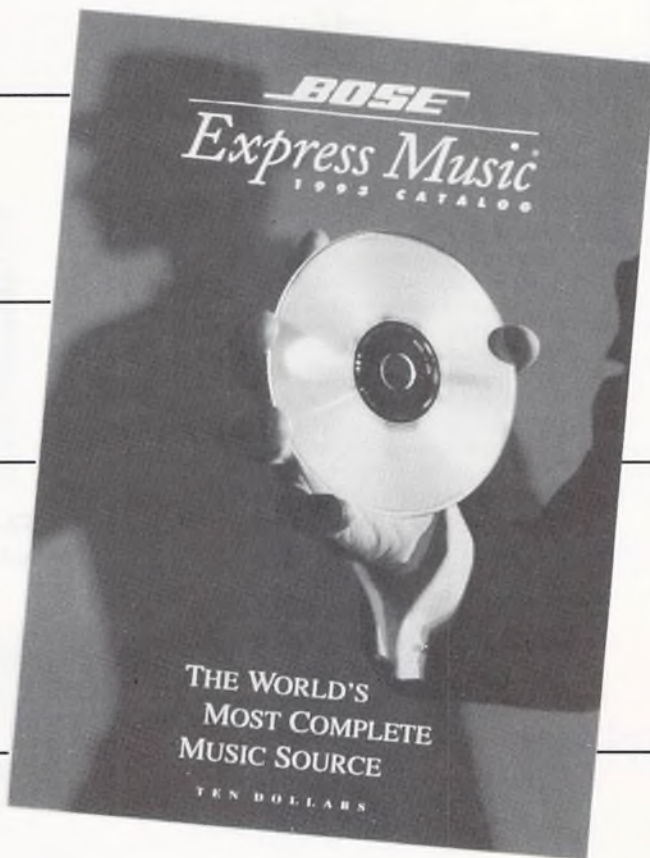
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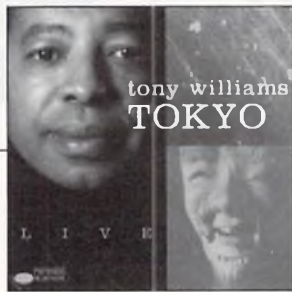
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Tony Williams

TOKYO LIVE—Blue Note 0777 7 99031 2 2: *Geo Rose; Blackbird; Ancient Eyes; Citadel; Warriors; Angel Street; Sister Cheryl; The Slump; Mutants On The Beach; Civilization; Crystal Palace; Life Of The Party; The Announcements.* (73:51/68:05)

Personnel: Williams, drums; Mulgrew Miller, piano; Wallace Roney, trumpet; Bill Pierce, tenor, soprano saxes; Ira Coleman, bass.

★★★★ 1/2

This two-cd set of live performances in Tokyo last February documents pianist Mulgrew Miller's final stand with Tony's quintet. And after five studio albums together, their chemistry on the bandstand is at a peak.

Curiously, most of the material here is drawn from Williams' 1987 album, *Civilization*, and the

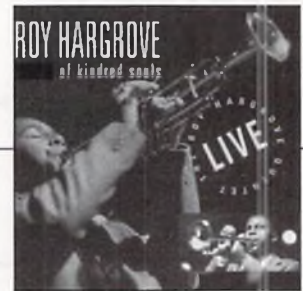
versions are naturally stretched to include bravado soloing. Tony does his virtuoso thing in a sizzling five-minute unaccompanied intro to "Warriors." His dramatic five-minute opening to "Sister Cheryl" is a clinic in dynamics and melodicism on the kit. And his introspective communion with the snare at the intro to "Mutants On The Beach" seems like homage to Buddy Rich. But some of his most impressive traps work occurs within the context of a song. Just check his whirlwind fills and daring triplets on the cool and classy "Ancient Eyes" or his precision swagger on "The Slump." An amazing drummer.

Hearing the harmonically adventurous Miller stretch out in a nightclub setting makes it painfully obvious how much his absence is being felt in the current edition of Tony Williams & the Jazz Messengers. While Wallace Roney and Bill Pierce continue to burn with authority, it was Miller's velvety touch, harmonic ingenuity and uncanny rhythmic sense that helped bring Tony's compositions to life. His exquisite 9 1/2-minute solo piano intro to "Citadel" and his masterful performance on the relaxed, soulful "Angel Street" are perfect examples of just how special Mulgrew is. But that doesn't even begin to measure the impact of his creative comping choices behind the other soloists. An invaluable team player, gone.

The vastly underrated Pierce puts in most of his solo time on soprano (notably "Geo Rose,"

"Angel Street," "Civilization," "Sister Cheryl," and a lightly swinging rendition of the Beatles' "Blackbird"), but he also blows tenor with fierce abandon on "Mutants On The Beach," "Warriors," and "Crystal Palaces." Wallace Roney, who sounds heroic throughout, flaunts some particularly bold open-horn playing on "Warriors," "Ancient Eyes," and "Citadel." Bassist Ira Coleman remains a near subliminal presence. But the real magician here is Mulgrew, darting in and out of Tony's pulse while intuitively turning the harmonies around.

—Bill Milkowski



Roy Hargrove

OF KINDRED SOULS—Novus 63154; *THE LEFT*

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NOW AND THEN

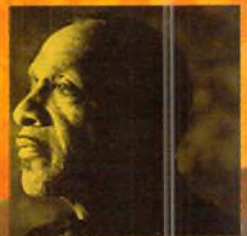
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Personnel: Roy Hargrove, trumpet, flugelhorn; Ron Blake, tenor, soprano saxes; Marc Cary, piano; Rodney Whitaker, bass; Gregory Hutchinson, drums; Gary Bartz, alto sax (3); Andre Hayward, trombone (2).

★ ★ ★ 1/2

among Hargrove and his colleagues. The sounds of the '60s beckon: the writing smacks of Wayne Shorter, Freddie Hubbard, Herbie Hancock. So does the playing, with ideas also culled from Coltrane, Miles. At its weakest, the band's efforts sound *too* derivative—a phrase here, a chord change there. But their sources and accomplishments are a great point of departure for something distinctive to evolve.

—Stephanie Stein

TANZ; BAR MITZVAH SPECIAL; DRAIDEL SONG; SEDIR DANCE; PAISACH IN PORTUGAL; BEBELE'S SHERBELE; MECHAYE WAR CHANT; KISS OF MEYER; EPILOGUE: TEARS; WEDDING SONG.

Personnel: Byron, clarinet; J.D. Parran, woodwinds; Mark Feldman, violin; Dave Douglas, trumpet; Josh Roseman, trombone; Uri Caine, piano; Steve Alcott, bass; Richie Schwarz, percussion; Lorin Sklamberg, Avi Hoffman, vocals.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The Roy Hargrove Quintet has meshed into a cohesive unit since its 1992 recording debut. This disc, recorded live this past winter on a U.S. jazz-club tour (the notes fail to specify in which clubs the recording actually took place), captures the group's unity of purpose. Their energy is infectious, even though their original tunes often lack true focus and development and sound too much like jazz-composition exercises.

Their sound, though, is lush and inviting. The interchange among the group feels balanced, democratic, their sense of swing is loose-limbed and steady. Nonetheless, Hargrove is the most compelling soloist here. His lines are full of surprise, his melodic sense strong. His sound and conception, on both trumpet and flugel, are rich, smooth as chocolate, with a subtle mixture of tastes arising from beneath the surface.

It's easy to detect some favorite influences



Don Byron

PLAYS THE MUSIC OF MICKEY KATZ—Elektra Nonesuch 79313-2: *PROLOGUE; NO TEARS; FRAIL-ACH JAMBOREE; HAIM AFEN RANGE ("HOME ON THE RANGE"); MAMALEGA DANCE; SWEET AND GENTLE; LITVAK SQUARE DANCE; C'EST SI BON; TROMBONIK*

Don Byron Plays The Music Of Mickey Katz is a startling, uplifting celebration of ethnicity within a society hellbent on assimilation. During the whitebread '50s, clarinetist/bandleader Mickey Katz was a leading exponent of klezmer—Yiddish social music. Katz not only brought a bracing virtuosity to klezmer's lilting Eastern European lyricism and dizzying tempi, but also a wonderfully warped sense of humor, cultivated during his tenure as musical director for Spike Jones' City Slickers. In Byron's hands, Katz's sublime mix of instrumental brinksman-ship and pop parodies transcends novelty.

Byron's excellent ensemble takes its cue from the clarinetist's searing lines and soaring tone, delivering performances that provoke as much thought as they do dancing and laughter. Complementing his work with Arcado and New and Used, Mark Feldman's daredevil performances suggest his is a talent approaching Byron's enormous scope.

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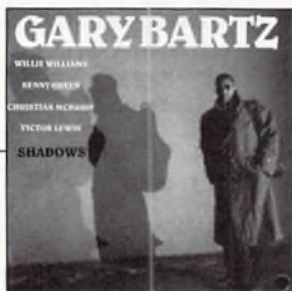


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CD REVIEWS

It doesn't take chutzpah to deal in kitsch; but, it takes much brass to embrace music from an ethnic group occasionally at heated political odds with one's own. Therein lies the power of Byron's album.
—Bill Shoemaker



Gary Bartz

SHADOWS—Timeless SJP 379: *MARION'S THEME; SHADOWS; SONG OF THE UNDERGROUND; PERESINA; HOW DO YOU KEEP THE MUSIC PLAYING?; CHILDREN OF THE NIGHT; HOLIDAY FOR STRINGS.* (69:25)

Personnel: Bartz, alto, soprano saxes; Benny Green, piano; William Williams, tenor (3-6); Christian McBride, bass; Victor Lewis, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

A promising young saxophonist in the '70s, having played with Miles Davis and McCoy Tyner, Gary Bartz remained somewhat in the shadows of the Young Lions phenomenon. Hence, the title of this long overdue project as a leader.

Backed by a Rolls Royce rhythm section of Victor Lewis, Christian McBride, and Benny Green, Bartz unleashes with torrents of Trane-like intensity on the modal title track and on Coltrane's powerful "Song Of The Underground." And as if that weren't enough to explain where he's at, check his quote from Trane's "The Countdown" at the tag of David Rose's "Holiday For Strings," a giddy tune turned into a blazing romp with McBride, and Lewis setting a furious tempo.

Bartz's pungent alto blends nicely with Willie Williams' husky tenor on two Tyner compositions, the lovely "Peresina," and the energized "Children Of The Night," as well as on the Michel Legrand ballad, "How Do You Keep The Music Playing?" Bartz's lone stab at soprano comes on "Marion's Theme," a lyrical John Williams offering from (of all places) the blockbuster movie *Raiders Of The Lost Ark*.

Somewhere between Jackie McLean and Bobby Watson lies Gary Bartz, a somewhat forgotten man from the '70s who has come back strongly to stake his claim in the '90s with this impassioned disc.
—Bill Milkowski



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Lello Molinari

NO MORE MR. NICE GUY—Accurate AC-4501: *C'ERA CHI?; BLUES ANYONE?; STUNT MAN; NO MORE MR. NICE GUY; YOUR CHILD; THE WALL; GOODNIGHT SWEETHEART.* (38:44)

Personnel: Molinari, acoustic bass; George Garzone, tenor, soprano saxophones; Luigi Tesserollo, guitar; Douglas Yates, alto saxophone, bass clarinet; Matt Wilson, drums.

★ ★ ★ 1/2

Lello Molinari has the perfect answer to those who believe that European jazz lacks authenticity: namely, emigration. A native of Italy, the bassist has worked out of Boston since 1986. *No More Mr. Nice Guy* draws on a diverse pool of influences, but never strays too far from the fundamentals of blues and bop (including a clever reconsideration of "Cherokee"). Molinari's compositions are built up from bluesy, infectious bass lines, combining familiarity with an eccentricity that sets his tunes apart. Although Molinari is the designated leader, the most assertive voices in this quintet belong to his countryman, guitarist Luigi Tesserollo and tenor George Garzone.

Garzone steals the session. He wails like

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6 **JAZZ, BLUES/SOUL/R&B AND BEYOND ALBUMS OF THE YEAR:** Select only LPs or CDs issued during the last 12 months (Sept. 1, '92-Aug. 31, 1993). Do not vote for 45s or EPs. Include full album title and artist's name. If your choice is part of a series, indicate volume number.

7 Only one selection counted in each category.

Ayler or Coltrane on "Stunt Man," and his "No More Mr. Nice Guy" explores the tenor's lower register while doubling Molinari's plunging bass. Tessarollo fills multiple roles: he can contribute lyrical solos, as on the title track, or move into a Frisellian mode, adding delicate clouds of sound or bursts of dissonance, as on "C'era Chi?" Exchanges among Garzone, Tessarollo, and altoist Ralph Yates establish the group dynamic, and Molinari's ensemble shifts gears smoothly through an engaging set, negotiating harmolodic frenzy as well as ballads and lullabies.

—Jon Andrews



Renee Rosnes

WITHOUT WORDS—Blue Note CDP 7 98168 2
8: *You And The Night And The Music*; *Little B's Poem*; *Estate*; *I've Got You Under My Skin*; *In A Sentimental Mood*; *Jitterbug Waltz*; *Dear Old Stockholm*; *Solar*; *Misty*. (46:09)

Personnel: Rosnes, piano; Buster Williams, bass; Billy Drummond, drums; with string orchestra conducted by Robert Freedman.

★ ★ ★ 1/2

George Shearing

HOW BEAUTIFUL IS NIGHT—Telarc CD-83325:
Dancing In The Dark; *Heather On The Hill*; *Oh, Lady Be Good!*; *More Than You Know*; *Our Waltz*; *How Beautiful Is Night*; *Once Upon A Time*; *Days Gone By*; *Put On A Happy Face*; *Haunted Ballroom*; *Just Imagine*; *The Surreal With The Fringe On Top*. (57:32)

Personnel: Shearing, piano; Neil Swanson, bass; Allan Ganley, drums; Louis Stewart, guitar; Frank Ricotti, vibraphone, percussion; with the Robert Farnon Orchestra conducted by Robert Farnon.

★ ★ 1/2

Fitting an orchestra alongside a jazz ensemble is always a difficult merge, particularly at high speeds. To meet the challenge, pianist Renee Rosnes and arranger Robert Freedman carved out a distinct, limited role for string orchestra as a component in jazz performance. The strings play a part, as an additional player might, but never dominate the session, as Freedman deploys his forces sparingly for maximum effect. The strings accent, or comment, on the trio's work, adding swirling texture to "Estate" and swing to "Jitterbug Waltz." The role expands on ballads, where the orchestra strives to heighten romance and sensuousness. The contribution to uptempo tunes is mostly embellishment, as the strings may lag behind, as on "You And The Night And The Music," where a "classical break" distracts.

Rosnes' trio offers speed and precision, with the pianist taking a bright, aggressive approach to uptempo material. Her emphasis on capturing the feeling of lyrics comes across best with "I've Got You Under My Skin." As usual, I wanted to hear more from bassist Buster Williams. *Without Words* keeps the focus on a fine trio, with strings that sometimes enhance, but only rarely detract.

While Rosnes uses strings within a jazz

context, George Shearing and arranger Robert Farnon opt for the converse approach, putting Shearing's piano in an orchestral setting for a series of "mini-concertos." *How Beautiful Is Night* aims at the "Boston Pops" audience, offering richly orchestrated treatments of Broadway show tunes with a jazz soloist. For a Shearing fan (or any jazz-oriented listener), the tail wags the dog. The pianist sounds inhibited by the orchestra, and rarely has sufficient room

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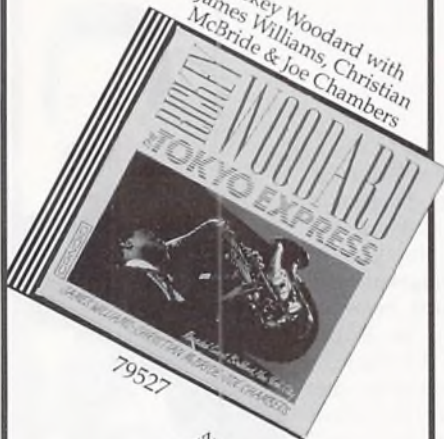


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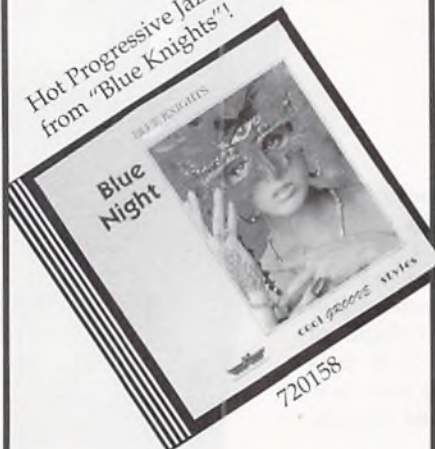
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CD REVIEWS

or time to develop his ideas. Shearing's quintet appears on a handful of tracks, but is submerged in the wash of sound. "Put On A Happy Face" is played without a trace of irony, and "Surrey With The Fringe On Top" is true to the spirit of *Oklahoma*. Shearing's light touch is much better suited to a small-group format, as last year's live *I Hear A Rhapsody* confirmed.

—Jon Andrews

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The Cortège

Mike Westbrook Orchestra

THE CORTÈGE—enja 7087 22: *IT STARTS HERE; DEMOCRATIE; BERLIN 16.2.79; ERME ESTUARY; KNIVSHULT-ASH WEDNESDAY; RUOTE CHE GIRANO; PIANO; LENADOR; JULY '79; ENFANCE; CORDOBA; SANTARCANGELO; KYRIE; A HEARTH BURNS; GRAFFITI.* (73:10/63:47)

Personnel: Westbrook, piano, tuba (12); Brian Godding, guitar; Georgie Born, cello; Steve Cook, bass; Dave Barry, drums; Phil Minton, trumpet, voice; Dave Plews, Guy Barker, Dick Pearce, trumpet, flugelhorn; Malcolm Griffiths, trombone, bass trombone; Alan Sinclair, Dave Powell (9-15), tuba; Kate Westbrook, tenor horn, bamboo flute, piccolo, vocals; Chris Hunter, alto, soprano, tenor saxes, flute; Phil Todd, tenor, soprano, alto saxes, clarinet, alto flute; Lindsay Cooper, bassoon, oboe, soprano sax; Chris Biscoe, baritone, alto, soprano saxes, alto clarinet, flute.

★ ★ ★ ★

Michael Mantler

FOLLY SEEING ALL THIS—ECM 517 363: *FOLLY SEEING ALL THIS; NEWS; WHAT IS THE WORD.* (44:55)

Personnel: Mantler, trumpet; Rick Fenn, guitar; Wolfgang Puschnig, alto flute; Karen Mantler, piano, voice (3); Dave Adams, vibraphone, chimes; Jack Bruce, voice (3); Alexander Balanescu, Claire Connors, violin; Bill Hawkes, viola; Jane Fenton, cello.

★ ★ ★

Two projects that integrate great works of text into fresh musical contexts, each using a different approach. Westbrook molds a cohesive work with a grandiose feel out of his curious sampler of dark, death-related European poetry (Rimbaud, Hesse, Lorca, Blake, and others); in contrast, Mantler sets out on a long musical trek toward a single, curt extract from playwright Samuel Beckett's final poem, *As The Story Was Told*. Oddly enough, although Westbrook's is a two-CD set (three LPs in its original, 1982 release—for which it won the Grand Prix du Disque de Jazz at Montreux in 1983) and Mantler's is only one, *Folly Seeing All This* seems longer and certainly more

tedious than *The Cortège*.

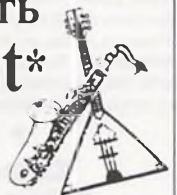
Such tedium might be fitting for a disc with words supplied by the author of *Waiting For Godot*, but that doesn't make it much more enthralling a listen. Despite some rich textures (particularly guitar/vibraphone parts), the half-hour-long wordless title cut hangs droopily on morose string-quartet charts and mildly minimalist repetitions. Jack Bruce's whispery vocal duet with Karen Mantler comes too little, too late—a shame Beckett's text wasn't used on the other 5/6ths of the disc, where it might have shone through the music's oppressive grayness.

Westbrook calls *The Cortège* "a funeral procession," but it manages to infuse the graven with a sense of life. Featuring some of England's finest obscure players, the Westbrook Orchestra has been working in a large-scale format since the late-'60s, and practice pays off. Flugelhornist Dick Pearce plays particularly fine solos, as do (feminist) improvisers Georgie Born and Lindsay Cooper—check the versatile reedsmith Cooper's bubbling bassoon take on "Democratie." Over the course of the long work, Westbrook's writing maintains a chamber-song basis, with jazz solos and Henry Cow-ish art-rock intrusions—a winning combination of toe-tapper and verse.

—John Corbett

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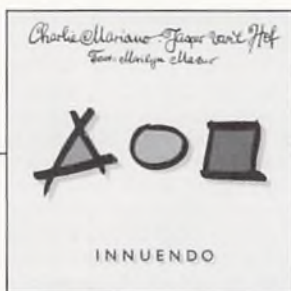
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Charlie Mariano

MARIANO—Intuition 3002: *Al Hadji; Fourth Sun; El Colibri; The Path; Daria; Kalimba; Pink Lady; Pavane (Pour Une Infante Defunte)*. (43:23)

Personnel: Mariano, soprano, alto saxophones; Paul Shighara, acoustic, electric guitars; Mike Herling, piano, synthesizers.

★ ★ 1/2

Charlie Mariano & Jaspar Van't Hoff

INNUENDO—Lipstick 8908: *Innuendo; Innamorata; Side Dish; Dorothee; Trio To Do; Silk; Embrace; Be Left*. (50:19)

Personnel: Mariano, alto, soprano saxes; Van't Hoff, piano, synthesizer; Marilyn Mazur, drums, percussion.

★ ★ ★ 1/2

Mariano is an indisputably fine saxophonist, blessed with both a nicely weathered sense of lyricism and technical aplomb. With these two releases, though, the virtues of his playing are at times obscured by genre-related associations. Electronics and commercial concessions tend to get in the way.

On *Mariano*, much of the material is all too pretty, too patently feel-good to feel very good. Basically, the album's organization of tracks places most of the superficial music up-front; things get more interesting past the halfway point. The modal think-piece, "The Path," the cool balladic haze of "Kalimba," and the suspended joyousness of the percolating "Pink Lady" suggest a more rewarding direction, only inconsistently taken.

Innuendo is the happier occasion of the two albums, with Mariano and keyboardist Van't Hoff carving out interesting synth-jazz pieces reminiscent of Passport Euro-fusion more than WAVE format vapidly. At times, the orchestral synth sounds are awash in digital dissipation—bad string sounds always leave a slick taste in the ear—and the lack of a human bassist gets old. But still, enough fundamental musicality and odd twists keep things alive. The title cut is more of a tone poem than a melodically driven piece. Synth/sample textures take an experimental turn on the affectingly atmospheric "Trio To Do," with Mariano's gossamer soprano sax lines gliding atop the sonic washes. The pastel impressionism of "Embrace" goes through some knotty modulations in the middle.

Closing the album is the almost prayerful "Be Left," advice that Mariano perhaps should heed more. Too much time spent in right field can be hazardous to your creative health.

—Josef Woodard



Eero Koivistoinen

ALTERED THINGS—Timeless SJP 367: *Kabuki; Altered Things; Film Noir; Everblue; Van Gogh; Palapeli; Clear Dream; Inspiration; Maghreb; BLT*. (62:32)

Personnel: Koivistoinen, tenor, soprano saxes; Randy Brecker, trumpet; Conrad Herwig, trombone; Dave Kikoski, piano; John Scofield, guitar (1,3,6,9,10); Ron McClure, bass; Jack DeJohnette, drums; Bugge Wesseltoft, synthesizer (3,5,6).

★ ★ ★ ★ 1/2

Financed by the Foundation for the Promotion of Finnish Music and the Finnish Performing Music Promotion Centre, this 1991 recording must have been Eero Koivisto's dream date. Imagine having the financial wherewithal to go out and buy a band that includes not one but two **DB** poll winners (Scofield and DeJohnette) along with New York ringers like Randy Brecker, Conrad Herwig, Ron McClure, and Dave Kikoski. It's a lineup as imposing as the vintage New York Yankees' mythical Mur-

derers Row.

But a cursory listen to *Altered Things* quickly reveals that these musicians were motivated by more than just funding. Koivisto happens to be a first-rate composer, an arranger of the highest order, and a strong post-Michael Brecker improviser on tenor.

They come charging hard out of the gate with "Kabuki," a swinging pedal-point number that highlights Scofield's warm legato flow over the changes to "Softly As In A Morning Sun-

rise." Eero's knack for arranging for three horns is duly exploited on the dreamy title track, on "Everblue," and on "Film Noir," another showcase for Scofield's lyrical burn. Kikoski acquits himself tastefully on the soprano-piano duet with Eero. "Clear Dream." Brecker's beautiful muted-trumpet work is highlighted on the moody "Van Gogh," while Herwig flaunts his impressive trombone chops on "Palapeli," an explosive romp propelled by Jack's signature snare-ride sizzle. And Sco returns to smoke the blues as only he can on "BLT," a jaunty offering that recalls his quartet work with Joe Lovano.

—Bill Milkowski

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Kinsey Report

CROSSING BRIDGES—Pointblank/Charisma V2-87004: *TOO EARLY TO TELL*; *I TAKE WHAT I WANT* (1); *SHE'S GONE*; *MIDNIGHT DRIVE*; *STRANGE THINGS*; *RELEASE YOURSELF*; *5 WOMEN*; *CHICKEN HEADS*; *ONE TOO MANY*; *KEY TO YOUR HEART*; *LOVE IS REAL*; *MY KIND OF WOMAN*; *DANCING WITH THE BEAST*; *I TAKE WHAT I WANT* (2). (53:33)

Personnel: Donald Kinsey, lead vocals, guitars; Ralph Kinsey, drums, percussion, backing vocals; Kenneth Kinsey, bass guitar, backing vocals; Ron Prince (4), Rico McFarland (7,8,10), guitar; Sid Wingfield, organ, piano (1,5,7,10); Charles Hodges, (11-13), Eddie Hawyrsh (14), organ; Andrew Love, sax (11); Chris Robinson, vocals (2,14); Lester "Big Daddy" Kinsey, harmonica (8).

★★★

Give credit to the Kinsey Report for forging links between the blues and two contemporary pop forms: funk and strong-armed, bruising rock. When the Kinsey brothers dish up a sweet and sexy funk-drenched number like "My Kind Of Woman" and follow that with hard-driving, guitar-rampaging social commentary like they do on "Dancing With The Beast," *Crossing Bridges* succeeds. There are lots of other bright spots scattered throughout the Kinseys' fourth album, including a brawny double dose of Sam & Dave's "I Take What I Want" (the delivery on both takes is equally unrestrained and rousing, with the tempo being the distinguishing factor), the funky down-home rocker "Chicken Heads" (great staccato guitar licks), and the blues-tinged pop melody, "Love Is Real."

The standout tune of the pack is the slow, funkified cover of Prince's "5 Women," which marks where guitarist Donald Kinsey takes his first break from axe-cessive behavior and attentively integrates his solos into the soul of the song. Up to that point, however, Kinsey's guitar has a monolithic presence. Andrew Love's short sax lines on "Love Is Real" are welcomed as are Lester "Big Daddy" Kinsey's inexplica-

bly abbreviated harmonica howls in the fading seconds of "Chicken Heads." Guitarist Kinsey does relinquish the spotlight throughout the second half of the album, picking and choosing where to sting (his song-appropriate fire-brand solos on "Dancing With The Beast") and where to lay back (quiet, unabrasive support on the soul ballad "Key To Your Heart"). If *Crossing Bridges* were an LP, I'd stick to Side B.

—Dan Ouellette



David Murray & Pierre Dorge's New Jungle Orchestra

THE JAZZPAR PRIZE—enja 7031: *DO GREEN ANTS DREAM?*; *DAVID IN WONDERLAND*; *GOSPEL MEDLEY*; *IN A SENTIMENTAL MOOD*; *SHAKIL WARRIORS (SIC)*; *SONG FOR DONI*. (54:37)

Personnel: Murray, tenor sax, bass clarinet; Dorge, guitar; Horace Parlan, piano; Harry Beckett, trumpet, flugelhorn; Per Jorgensen, trumpet; Jorg Huke, trombone; Jesper Zeuthen, alto sax, bass clarinet; Jakob Mygind, soprano, tenor saxes; Irene Becker, keyboards; Jens Skov Olsen, bass; Audun Kleive, drums; Donald Murray, vocal (3).

★ ★ ★

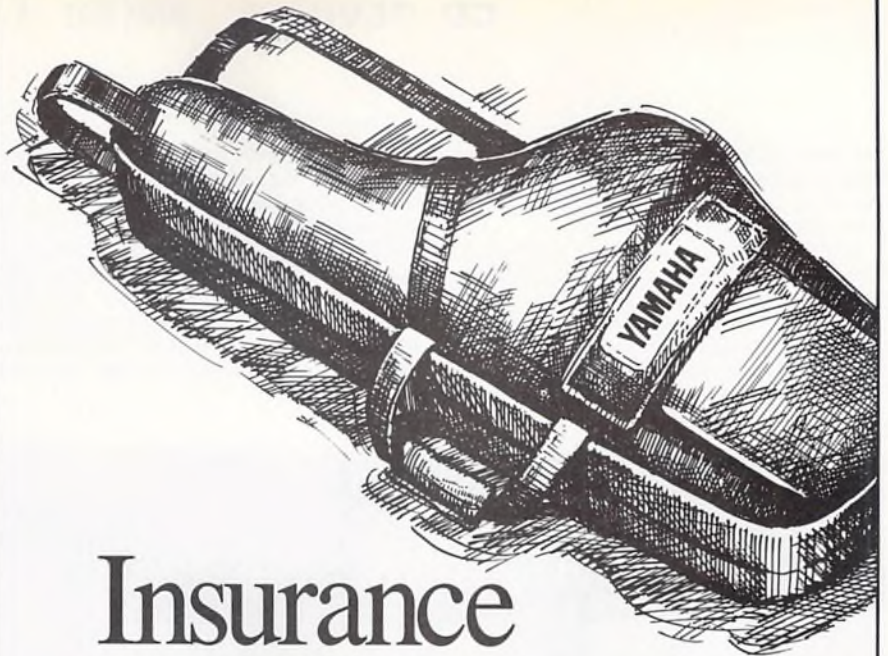
Pierre Dorge New Jungle Orchestra

KARAWANE—Olusén 5141: *VARIATION ON BLACK BEAUTY*; *ORANG ITU*; *NOSTALGIA AT NORREBRO*; *EAST-WEST HYMN*; *VARIATION ON MOOD INDIGO*; *APA KABAR?*; *CAMELOPARDALIS*; *FROM COPENHAGEN TO UBUD*; *DUKE GREET'S SUN RA FROM OUTER SPACE*; *BLUES FOR KAREN*; *LOST IN THE DESERT, I SEE A ... / CARAVAN*. (66:16)

Personnel: Dorge, guitar, bike horns; Harry Beckett, trumpet, flugelhorn; Jorg Huke, trombone; Jesper Zeuthen, alto sax, bass clarinet; Volker Schlott, soprano, alto saxes; Marten Carlson, clarinet, taragot, tenor sax; Jakob Mygind, clarinet, soprano, tenor sax; Charlotte Halberg, piccolo; Irene Becker, piano, keyboards; Hugo Rasmussen, bass; Ayi Solomon, percussion; Bent Clausen, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

Pierre Dorge's New Jungle Orchestra has been one of jazz's most consistently engaging big bands of the last decade. Mixing an off-center slant on Ellington's jungle music, a hale use of African and other non-Western sources, and measured postmodern orchestral tactics, the Danish guitarist creates an exotically hued, rhythmically vibrant music that is simultaneously sophisticated and accessible. A proj-



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ect with David Murray, then, becomes an eagerly awaited event; unfortunately, *The Jazzpar Prize* falls short of the inspired synergy such collaborations can produce.

Given the strength of Murray's previous orchestra outings and the presumably motivating prestige of Denmark's Jazzpar Prize, it's surprising how the momentum of the program dissipates after the two opening Dorge compositions, the simmering Gambian-tinged "Do

Green Ants Dream?" and the moody "David In Wonderland," both of which are laced with little jolts and jokes. This version of Murray's "Shakil Warriors" (sic) has anemic rhythmic drive and lyrically diffuse voicings. More disappointing is Murray's two-dimensional "Gospel Medley," which is highlighted by sanctified riffing that Murray, who solos effectively throughout the date, uses as a backdrop for his testimony. Murray's best chart, "Song For Doni," is cogent

orchestral balladry that leaves no heartstring unpulled. But it's too little too late; this potentially great album is merely good. The biggest surprise of the date, though, is Horace Parlan, whose work is stirring, yet unflorid, particularly in his and Murray's moving duet reading of "In A Sentimental Mood."

Karawane is another indicator of how rewarding a Murray/NJO collaboration could be. Murray's swagger would be the icing on the cake on such Dorge originals as the deep-orbit strut, "Duke Greets Sun Ra From Outer Space," and Dorge's bold recastings of such Ellington chestnuts as "Caravan," which deftly blends loopy, serpentine voicings with get-down funkiness. But, more importantly, *Karawane* is a potent indicator of Dorge's conceptual acuity and his wherewithal in refining his orchestral vision without such former NJO marquee players as John Tchicai and the late, great Johnny Dyani. He has a deep bench of role players, including veterans Harry Beckett and Hugo Rasmussen. In Irene Becker and Bent Clausen, NJO has composers who leaven Dorge's sharp wit and bracing juxtapositions with, respectively, the pensive lyricism of "Orang Iu" and the r&b tang of "Blues For Karen."

And, *Karawane* is a thorough statement of Dorge's own dazzling stylistic versatility; he has everything from West African effervescence to bar-band grit down cold.

—Bill Shoemaker

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Carla Bley & Steve Swallow

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Personnel: Bley, piano; Swallow, bass.

★ ★ ★ ★

Of late, soulmates Bley and Swallow have gone together into that precarious area where wits begin to wither and what-me-worry? lyricism begins to sound suspiciously like radioplay concession. But echoes of Monk ("Copyright Royalties"), supper club suavely, continental waltzes ("Peau Douce"), tango, gospel, and vulcanized Latin strains music ("Carnation") give these sketches a kind of cross-cultural moxy that runs deeper than their pretty surfaces. Swallow's plectrum-style bass technique and high-range ventures gives his lines a singing guitaristic quality that neatly complements Bley's always understated, underrated

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—Josef Woodard



Mulgrew Miller

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Personnel: Miller, piano; Eddie Henderson, trumpet; Kenny Garrett, alto, soprano saxes; Joe Henderson, tenor sax; Steve Nelson, vibes; Christian McBride, bass; Lewis Nash, drums.

★★★★

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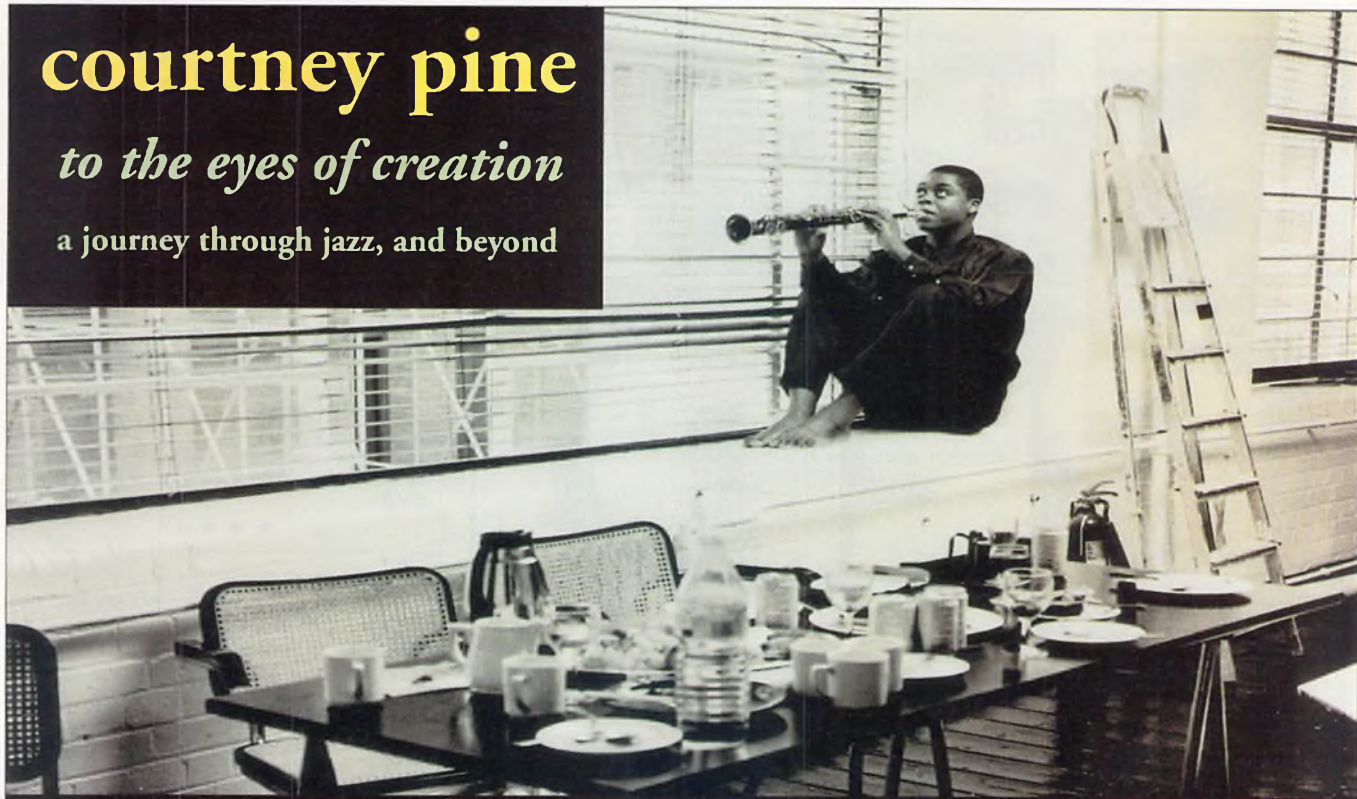
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CD REVIEWS



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the generational divide with the greatest of ease and empathy. From twentysomething bassist-of-choice Christian McBride to this season's tenor icon, the fiftysomething Joe Henderson, with Miller squarely in the middle, the mid-sized group assembled here gives a burnished gleam and breadth to Miller's music. Supple phrase-maker Garrett remains one of the bright lights of young altoists, and it's great to hear the too-unsung Henderson in action again. Miller's pianistic palette is typically rich, and compositionally, his material represents a mature and often cool reconsideration of mid-'60s esthetics, from the handsome sway of "Grew's Tune" to the upswing investigations of "Thinkin' Out Loud."

—J.W.



Jeff Lorber

WORTH WAITING FOR—Verve Forecast 314 517 998: *RAIN SONG; THE UNDERGROUND; YELLOWSTONE; PUNTA DEL ESTE; LOST WITH YOU; WORTH WAITING FOR; HIGH WIRE; WAVELENGTH; COLUMBUS AVE.; DO WHAT IT TAKES; JAZZERY.* (57:38)

Personnel: Lorber, keyboards, guitar (6,11); Art Porter, alto sax (1,9); Gary Meek, soprano sax; Dave Koz, alto, soprano saxes (6,7); Paul Jackson Jr., Lee Ritenour (10), Oliver Liebner (7), Buzz Feiten (8), guitar; Bruce Hornsby, piano (3); Eric Jordan (5), Janis Siegel (4), vocal; Alec Milstein, electric bass; John Robinson, drums; Paulinho da Costa, percussion.

★ ★ 1/2

Lorber is an old hand at the pop-jazz trade, really a pioneer—if that term fits in a genre that flees from innovation. This album is more of the same in a more-of-the-same musical niche. And while, by degrees, it is rendered with greater skill and taste than the average "contemporary jazz" product, it's still too little, too late—not really worth the wait. Tighten-upped funk rhythm beds are impressive, but they're almost non-sequiturs alongside the endless, tired pentatonic melody lines. "Punta Del Este," though, is an exception, a swarthy quasi-Latin beauty. Generally, though, the album makes you hungry for fast food.

—J.W.



Garry Dial & Dick Oatts

PLAY COLE PORTER—DMP CD-495: *EVERYTHING I LOVE; SO IN LOVE; ALL OF YOU; DOWN IN THE DEPTHS; WHAT IS THIS THING CALLED LOVE; AT LONG LAST LOVE; RIDIN' HIGH; LET'S DO IT; GOODBYE, LITTLE DREAM, GOODBYE; TOO MUCH IS JUST RIGHT.* (62:28)

Personnel: Dial, piano; Oatts, tenor, alto saxophones; Jay Anderson, bass; Jeff Hirshfield, drums.

★ ★ ★ 1/2

At the hands of Dial and Oatts, Cole Porter sounds less like a Broadway and Tin Pan Alley songwriter than a fusion pioneer who paved the way for Chick Corea and Keith Jarrett. Concentrating on lesser-known material, the breezy-cool pianist and saxophonist render even such familiar standards as "At Long Last Love" and "Let's Do It" nearly unrecognizable, abstracting the melodies and substituting wistful poignancy for Porter's witty exuberance. Though they've spent more than a decade together in Red Rodney's band, the two side-step bebop in favor of an airy sort of modal swing, with Oatts, for example, blending Coltrane with Ben Webster on "What Is This Thing Called Love."

—Larry Birnbaum



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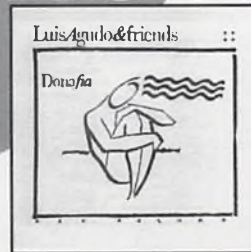
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Back & Forth

by Zan Stewart

We all know that music experienced live and in person communicates the most powerfully. But since clubs or concert halls aren't always within reach, videos remain a significant means of bringing the spirit and revelry of performance into the comfort of your living room. Videos also add the aspect of providing information as well as sounds, exemplified by several of this month's selections.

For starters, *Good Morning Blues* (Yazoo Video, 52 min., directed by Walt Lowe) offers a survey course on country blues—from its roots in the field hollers of slaves to its transformation into urban blues in the late '40s. Narrated on camera by a trim B.B. King, the often slow 1978 film includes scratchy recordings by seminal artists Charlie Patton and Robert Johnson. Better still are the live performances of Sam Chatmon, Big Joe Williams, and 85-year-old Furry Lewis, who cries out "Brownsville Blues" sans his false teeth while dropping in biting slide licks.

Out Of The Blacks And Into The Blues, a



Ben Webster: a sparkling package

two-part 1972 film (*Yazoo*, directed by Robert Manthoulis) covers similar material but in a *cinema verite* manner, emphasizing interviews and performances. Part I, *Along The Old Man River* (52 min.), focuses on Robert Pete Williams, Roosevelt Sykes, and Brownie McGhee and Sonny Terry. Williams, who relates how he shot a man who was set to attack him in a bar, is the film's star. He's a vibrant entertainer, and when he sings "Scrap Iron Blues," he intones the

word "Why" and makes it come out a high-pitched "Waaaayyyhhhhhyyy!"

Part II, *A Way To Escape The Ghetto* (56 min.), offers solid sections on Mance Lipscomb—the straight-speaking Texas bluesman who was a sharecropper for 50 years—and B.B. King. King's seen in a candid interview and some terrific close-ups, playing in a Chicago bar. There, sweat pouring down his trademark-grimaced face, he nails a delightfully upbeat version of "I Need My Woman." McGhee, Terry, Junior Wells, Buddy Guy, and Willie Dixon also get space.

We head into jazz from the '40s with *Boogie In Blue* (Rhapsody Films, 40 min., directed by Flavyn Feller and Arlena Gibson), a film about the arcane figure **Harry "The Hipster" Gibson**. A pianist and singer who wrote the novelty tune, "Who Put The Benzedrine In Mrs. Murphy's Ovaltine?" Gibson's moment was during the mid-to-late '40s, then he faded fast; he's seen during his prime in a soundies clip. Gibson, who talks in a scratchy semi-yell, describes such salient topics as spending the afternoon with Mae West, entangled in various sexual positions in her apartment. The film, made by his daughter and granddaughter, ends with the note that Gibson killed himself in

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1991, at the age of 75.

Gypsy Guitar: The Legacy Of Django Reinhardt (Shanachie, 52 min., directed by John Jeremy) is a beautifully photographed, engrossing film that reveals the ongoing reverence for the music of the French gypsy guitarist, who died in 1953 at the age of 43. Shot in various European locales, the video combines performance shots, archival photos, and accompanying footage into a beguiling whole. The players include the known: Bireli Lagrene, Babik Reinhardt, the master's son—and the unknown: the prodigious Stochelo Rosenberg, a Dutch artist who could be considered the Sonny Rollins of Djangology. The music is inspired and alluring.

Fans of the swing era will delight in 1972's *Born To Swing* (Rhapsody, 50 min., directed by John Jeremy). The concise film profiles several members of the 1943 **Count Basie** organization, among them saxophonist Buddy Tate, trombonist Dickey Wells, drummer Jo Jones, and saxophonist Earle Warren. Wells' story: While a star with Basie, by the time the film was made, Wells was working as a messenger on Wall Street. Tate and Jones, on the other hand, continued their celebrated careers as jazzmen. The film includes a number of performances; a closing blues is particularly enthralling.

So is **Ben Webster: The Brute And The Beautiful** (Shanachie, 60 min., directed by John Jeremy), a sparkling package on the great saxophonist. The title derives from Webster's dual nature: his unpredictable, often volatile off-stage personality, which was fueled by alcohol; and his musical gift, particularly his extraordinary ballad artistry. Ace performances abound: Webster playing "Cottontail" with Ellington in the '40s, encoring it in 1971, sitting in with Duke in Denmark. There are several blues—one with Gerry Mulligan from Dinah Shore's TV show is a dandy—and ballads, including a version of the classic "Chelsea Bridge." Interviews with the subject, Harry "Sweets" Edison, and others that knew him round out this compelling portrait.

It's out of the swing era and into the present with **Curlew: The Hardwood** (Cuneiform, 90 min., produced by Bob Teagan & The Wendy Hour), which finds saxophonist George Cartwright's creative quintet cutting loose at the Knitting Factory in 1991. The ensemble works within forms—a variation of a rock, funk, or Latin beat anchors these 11 numbers that deftly utilize an ear-grabbing front-line mix of saxophone, cello (Tom Cora), and guitar (Davey Williams). The solos range from grainy blues licks and room-filling sustains from Williams to angry shouts and soft, cat-meow murmurings from Cora and lyrical alto ideas from the leader. The footage uses a minimum of camera angles and tricks, making it easy to concen-

trate on the music.

Michael and Randy Brecker headline *Return Of The Brecker Brothers: Live In Barcelona* (GRP, 60 min., directed by Larry Jordan). Three of the tunes here came from the brothers' companion studio CD; the three others include the Breckers' early favorite, "Some Skunk Funk," and trumpeter Randy's "Inside Out." The leaders glow, they blaze: Randy hurls steaming strands of

notes on "Above And Below," Michael unleashes deliciously hot potatoes on "Skunk Funk." Keyboardist George Whitty, guitarist Mike Stern, bassist James Genus, and drummer Dennis Chambers provide ample support. The sound is first-rate, but the use of excessive camera angles and effects like b&w slow-motion close-ups, while adding an arty flair to the film, are, in the end, self-defeating annoyances. **DB**

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Photo: Rolf Ambor

1 Muhal Richard Abrams

"Blu Blu Blu" (from *BLU BLU BLU, Black Saint, 1990*) Abrams, piano.

I don't really care for the actual tone of this. For me, one of the very important things is that you have to make this instrument ring, resonate in a certain way. This particular individual has some soul or blues in his sound, but it seems to be a bit forced to me. I was, still am, a big Oscar Peterson fan because he gets that resonance. He's the first person I thought of when I first heard this, but I'd be very shocked to hear it was him. I give it 1½ stars.

2 Wild Bill Davis & Johnny Hodges

"Just Squeeze Me" (from *IN A MELLOWTONE, Bluebird, 1966*) Davis, organ; Hodges, alto sax.

That's got to be Johnny Hodges. Nothing for me to say about that except it's killin'. This is very beautiful. It has a bounce to it, it has that dance element I was talking about. And see, everybody is in sync. I think that's "Squeeze Me." I don't know whether Fats Waller or Ellington wrote that. I give this 4 stars. I'd be afraid to guess who the organ player is. Jimmy Smith? I know very little of the history of that instrument.

DH: *Wild Bill Davis.*

Okay, he was killin'. Ain't no way I could sit at the organ and do that. I knew whoever it was came in with all kinds of conviction and soul. This is more in line with what I like.

3 Mal Waldron & Steve Lacy

"The Mooche" (from *HOT HOUSE, RCA/Novus, 1990*) Waldron, piano; Lacy, soprano sax.

I know this piece, it's Duke Ellington's "The Mooche." Well, it's the same problem like with the others. There is just not the rhythmic sophistication and pulse that's necessary for this to be particularly moving. The piano player is playing everything in the same register. This is what happened when stride piano stopped being a necessary part of one's development: the piano got reduced to what's happening right here. This is an example of how I hope I never play. I'd give it 2 stars or 1½.

4 Art Hodes

"Mr. Jelly Lord" (from *PAGIN' MR. JELLY, Candid, 1988*) Hodes, piano.

It's very beautiful, it's just not swinging. Sounds like another Jelly Roll piece. Again, the piano playing has to be much more physical, but the tone is good. I'm enjoying

MARCUS ROBERTS

by Dave Helland



SUSAN P. STANTON

A couple of weeks before Art Hodes died, I played for Marcus Roberts recently recorded versions of the repertoire he had selected for his latest RCA/Novus release, *If I Could Be With You: Monk, Morton, Ellington, Johnson*. As you'd expect from a compatriot of Wynton Marsalis, Roberts pulls no punches as to what constitutes good jazz as well as good piano technique.

"Jazz is a very rhythm-oriented style of music. You can't just play it—it's got to be felt, it's got to be articulated with dancing in mind," he explained. "Even the more abstract music from, say, the bebop period, even that music should be played with a dance concept."

This was Roberts' first "Blindfold Test"; and, of course, there was a ringer.

this more than anything else I've heard thus far. People used to dance to this music—the dance element is very important. I give it 2½; oh oh, starting to get kind of into it. Yeah, there it is. What the hell took so long? If he'd played the whole thing like that it would have been killing. Right there toward the end, the last eight measures of it. [scats] Who's that?"

DH: *Art Hodes. He's in his 80s here.*

That's what it was. He's got the feeling. The last eight measures he got into it. If I could hear something he was playing 30 or 40 years ago, be a whole 'nother proposition.

5 Labéque Sisters

"Carolina Shout" (from *GLAD RAGS, Angel, 1985*) Katia & Marielle Labéque, pianos.

It sounds to me like they have good technique, but there is no real philosophical adherence to what [James P.] Johnson had in mind when he wrote this piece. I can't hear the dance flavor of it, you see. It sounds like cocktail music to me. I'd give it a zero, myself.

6 Gonzalo Rubalcaba

"Well, You Needn't" (from *DISCOVERY, Blue Note, 1991*) Rubalcaba, piano; Charlie Haden, bass; Paul Motian, drums.

I don't like this kind of stuff here. Tell me, if you were to hear this and you'd never heard Thelonious Monk, would this give you a clue

to what Monk spent his whole life evolving into? I would strongly say no. This has nothing to do with Monk, but it is a very passionate, intense way of playing. Frankly, I like it least of anything I've heard, but I give it 3 stars because it is very intense. But let me make it very clear that there were sections that I, as a pianist, found very disturbing—all these glissandi and all that. He has tremendous fire and technique; jack, he just don't know nothing about Monk.

7 Reginald Robinson

"The Showstopper" (from *THE STRONG MAN, Delmark, 1993*) Robinson, piano.

Sounds like it could be Scott Joplin piano music. I don't know the tune, but I will know it. I plan to do a record of ragtime music in the not-too-far-distant future. Funny thing, even though I don't feel that this person has the real knowledge—it sounds like a good classical pianist who has wanted to play [ragtime]—he's playing well enough that it sounds good to me. 3 stars.

DH: *This is a ringer. The tune was written by Reginald Robinson, a 20-year-old from the West Side of Chicago who taught himself ragtime.*

Very beautiful playing; I give him 4 stars. You could have told me that it was a Scott Joplin tune and I'd have believed it, definitely. I like that it's clean, the clarity to it. You can tell he studied very meticulously what Joplin did. Can you leave me the tape? You tell him for me that I really found it delightful to hear his work. **DB**